THE
CLIMAX

Mrs Frank Varney

Mishawaka

Ind

# THE CLIMAX

"IS THIS THE END?"—*Page 333*

# THE CLIMAX

BY

GEORGE C. JENKS

FROM THE CELEBRATED PLAY OF THE SAME NAME BY

EDWARD LOCKE

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ILLUSTRATED BY

W. W. FAWCETT

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## *THE SONG OF A SOUL*

*Every soul hath it's song—*
*It's melody divine,*
*Rising to ecstasy,*
*And so hath mine.*
*Just let me sing my song divine*
*Or I shall die of sorrow.*

*A star in yonder sky*
*Invites this soul of mine*
*To lift it's voice on high*
*In melody divine.*
*There's promise in that star—a sign*
*Of hope and peace to-morrow.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS

"Is This the End?.....Frontispiece

"Play Your Old Exercises Yourself"..... 248

"One in a Thousand"..... 285

Like Old Times, Eh?"..... 316

## CHAPTER I

### "Give me some music."

Azalia lay somnolent in the afternoon stillness. In Southern Ohio there are days in mid-June when not only the vegetation shrinks and shrivels before the heat-waves, but the very snake-fences, a prominent feature of the landscape in that region, seem to squirm more tortuously, like steel rails in a blast-furnace. This was such an afternoon. The sunshine swooped down mercilessly on the exposed places, and tried to force its way into the cool creek-bottoms, where the swamp-grass and cat-tails swayed lazily in the slow-moving waters, and bumble-bees buzzed about the flag-lilies. It was only partly successful. To be sure, points and patches of restless yellow light darted here and there, after playing hide-and-seek among the leaves and branches of the willows and sycamores. But they hardly disturbed the shadows gathered in the hollows, and did not even dry the stones where they had been splashed by the stream as it flowed lazily by on its way to the distant river.

The white road which stretched away from the end of Main street in a long and dusty perspective between the green potato fields, until it swung out of sight around Hunter's barn, seemed to be smoking in the heat, for there was a haze that made the eyes smart if one watched it for a few moments. Not that anyone was watching it. The five hundred inhabitants of Azalia all had enough to do without staring along the pike on a blistering hot afternoon. Any of the industrious gentlemen talking politics in a maddening monotone in Rundell's grocery, which was also the postoffice, could have told you that.

Azalia was an all-fired busy place, especially on market days. Why, Granger's Hotel, which reared its straggling, clap-boarded bulk in the square where the street ended and the pike began, sometimes had as many as fifteen farmers for dinner, and then there would be such a hurly-burly of queer vehicles hitched outside—muddy or dusty, according to the state of the weather—that they blocked up all that part of town.

On this day, although no strangers were in Azalia, and the streets seemed asleep, there was activity enough within doors—chiefly in the nature of gossip. Things unusual were happening, or about to happen. Even the politicians at Rundell's

occasionally dropped their droning discussion of the next State election, which would not take place until November, to talk about matters of much nearer interest—at least, in point of time.

Professor Theophilus Cooper, of Columbus, was announced to lecture that evening, at the Town Hall, on hypnotism, thought transference, mental suggestion, and kindred phenomena, and it was understood that the learned gentleman would hypnotize anyone in the audience willing to submit himself for the experiment. This was one topic that had stirred up all Azalia. Another was the rumor that the music committee of St. Jude's Church, now in session, contemplated an important change in the *personnel* of the quartette choir.

Nearly everybody in Azalia attended St. Jude's, and the pastor, the Reverend Thomas Treadhouse, was an important personage in a mild way. Mrs. Thomas Treadhouse (Susan was her Christian name) exerted considerable influence that was not so mild. Particularly was this felt in the choir. She had taken vocal lessons in Cincinnati for one term before her marriage, and, on the strength of that brief period of instruction, had insisted on regularly exercising her thin soprano, with its irritating tremolo, as a member of the quartette. St. Jude's had always been proud of the musical part of its

service, and although Heinrich Von Hagen, the organist, middle-aged and matter-of-fact, took little heed of the work of the singers, so long as their time was correct, the soprano had been a thorn in the side of the music committee ever since Mrs. Treadhouse had forced herself into the vacancy made by the marriage and departure of her predecessor. The grumblings of the committee had reached Mrs. Treadhouse, of course. But she did not care. Who were the music committee, she would like to know?—more or less shrilly. Now, unless rumor was at fault, the question was likely to be answered to her discomfiture, that very afternoon.

Down at Rundell's there was only a languid interest in music. The parliament, curled up on cracker-boxes or leaning wearily against the counter, soon exhausted its surmises as to what the music committee would do, and when Daddy Wylie, father of Joe Wylie, the blacksmith, seated on a last year's cider-keg, the wooden faucet still in it, suddenly brought up the subject of Professor Cooper's promised entertainment, the other members of the conclave all perked up, eager for controversial battle.

"Talkin' about this here mental suggestion," croaked Daddy, "I don't take no stock in it. I say

that hyp-no-tism and thought transfusion and all them things is just a money-making scheme."

"Oh, I dunno," objected Wilkins, the tailor, slowly—not that he really differed from the sentiments expressed, but because it was the custom at Rundell's to stimulate argument by taking the opposite side.

"Oh, you don't, eh?" snapped Daddy. "Well, now what's this here pro-fessor comin' to the Town Hall for? Why, to get money. I don't need no mental suggestion to learn me that. We folks 'll pay to go in, and he'll get the coin and keep it—that is, most of it. He'll have to pay the hall-rent, of course."

"There ain't no denying that part of it," acquiesced Wilkins, grimly. "No one's coming here to use our muneeceepal building for nothing."

A sonorous, masterful voice broke in here with:

"All that doesn't say the theory of mental suggestion is baseless, or that a person of strong will cannot direct the thoughts of another into any channel he pleases."

It was Solomon Potter, the undertaker, popularly credited at Rundell's and elsewhere with being an exceedingly well-read man, who had thus spoken. Mr. Potter was also the sexton of St. Jude's Church.

Wilkins glanced sharply at Daddy Wylie, to see how he took this crusher, but that veteran on the field of disputation was not dismayed.

"I'd jest like to see that there pro-fessor make me think anything I don't want to. Neither him nor no other man can do it," was his dogged rejoinder.

As Daddy Wylie was conceded to be the most obstinate individual in Azalia—where pig-headedness was regarded as a virtue which everybody sought to attain—most of his listeners nodded energetic assent.

"Well, Dad, it might be so in your case," put in Dave Rundell, who, busily weighing sugar, had not taken part in the conversation heretofore. "But I seen Doc Raymond make some passes behind Heinrich Von Hagen, just as he come out of the organ-gallery, last Sunday, when Von was waiting for his daughter, and Doc wanted to see her home himself, and what do you think happened?"

"What?" growled Daddy, pushing up the tuft of white hair on his chin with the ends of his skinny fingers, resentfully. "What did happen?"

"Why, Von Hagen marched out of the church without even looking behind him, and Doc took Adelina home, just as he'd wanted to."

Daddy Wylie expectorated thoughtfully into

the open door of the big empty stove in the middle of the store.

"I don't see nothin' in that to prove there was hyp-no-tism," he snorted. "Von just nat'rally got tired of waitin' for the gal. That's all there was to it."

Rundell shrugged his shoulders.

"Maybe you're right, Dad. But it looks to me as if Doc Raymond was influencing Heinrich Von Hagen's mind to make him do something he hadn't meant to do at first. I didn't ask Doc, and he never said a word to me about it. But I know he's mightily interested in the subject of mental suggestion. Besides, what did he spread out his hands behind Heinrich for, if he wasn't trying to work on his brain without him knowing it?"

"He might have been brushing a fly off the old man's bald head. Haw, haw, haw!"

Daddy guffawed, wheezed and choked at his own delicate conceit, and all the others, except Rundell and Potter, laughed in sympathy, for Daddy's humor, while subtle, was also extremely rich. It was just of the kind to appeal to the assembled company. Dad knew his Azalia.

While Daddy Wylie thus disposed of telepathy for ever in a gale of derision, a dust-cloud, with a horse and buggy in the middle of it, came rolling

toward town over the white-hot road between the potato-fields. The horse was moving along at a businesslike trot, the broad-shouldered young man cramped up in the buggy-seat keeping the reins at an easy tension, which, without hampering the horse's gait, never let him forget that a master was behind him.

Not bad-looking was this young man driving into Azalia in the dust. Some folk considered him handsome, and certainly his face had a rugged strength, expressed in the straight nose, rather high cheek-bones and well-developed chin, which was not without manly charm. Perhaps the mouth might have been larger. Somehow, when considered in conjunction with his chin, it suggested that he might nurse an extensive set of prejudices which he was prepared to defend against all comers at any time. But this defect—if it was a defect—was offset by large, thoughtful brown eyes, in which might be read kindly toleration of other people's false convictions, although he never could be induced to share them. There was intellectual capacity behind the broad forehead, and the goodly space between the eyes denoted a prompt and firm grasp of admitted facts. John Raymond was his name. He was the "Doc" referred to by Dave Run-

dell as the hero of the mental suggestion incident in St. Jude's Church.

He pulled up in front of Granger's Hotel, and, jumping out of the buggy, stretched himself luxuriously. Sammy Granger, the nineteen-year-old son of the proprietor, hoisted himself from a wooden arm-chair tilted against the house, where he had been lazily watching Raymond's approach, and threaded his way slowly among half a dozen other chairs scattered about, until he brought up, yawning, at the horse's head.

"Hello, Doc! Been over to Hunter's? How's the kid?"

There was only the faintest curiosity in Sammy's tone. It was too hot for powerful emotions, especially on behalf of other people.

"The boy's all right," returned John Raymond, cheerily. "No bones broken. Only a few bruises. He was more frightened than hurt."

"I guess he won't climb a cherry-tree again for a while," opined Sammy, preparing to lead the horse, buggy and all, toward the stable.

"I don't know. It takes more than a tumble like that to revolutionize boyish instincts—primordial, probably," laughed Raymond. "I'm afraid he'll be up in that tree again within forty-eight

hours, although no doubt the accident will make him a little more careful—for a few days."

"He'd better. Them durned cherry-tree limbs are the brittlest wood I know. A feller has to watch himself when he's after cherries. Remember them two ribs of mine you helped to fix up, Doc?"

"Yes, you were a very sick boy for a while, Sam."

"That's what I was," assented Sammy, dolefully. "I ain't got no use for cherries to this day."

"Are you going to the lecture to-night?" asked Raymond, seeking a more cheerful subject.

"What—me stay away from a good show?" yelped Sammy, with a knowing chuckle. "You bet I'm going. Why, a hardware drummer who was here last week said he went to the lecture in Zanesville, and it was better than a circus. Professor Cooper made one man believe he was deef-and-dumb. An auctioneer he was, and a gabby one at that. But when the Professor told him he couldn't speak—gee!—he couldn't make a peep—not a sound. Then he had fellows standing on their heads, and crawling about the floor, and doing all sorts of stunts. It must be fine. I wouldn't miss it for a farm. You'll be there, I s'pose?"

"Very likely," was the careless response of the young doctor, as he turned away.

John Raymond, sauntering down Main street, pondered over what Sammy Granger had told him about Professor Cooper's achievements in Zanesville. He was much more interested than his off-hand manner had indicated. The upshot of his reflections was that he resolved to have a little conversation with the Professor after his lecture that evening, if possible. Then his thoughts took a new direction. The vision of a young girl, with golden-brown hair and blue-gray eyes, blotted out everything else, and he quickened his steps along the red-brick sidewalk with a smile of pleasant anticipation.

Two blocks from the hotel he turned to the left, under an arcade of elms that over-arched the thoroughfare from fence to fence, and where the scent of roses, carnations, pansies and honeysuckles mingled with the softer fragrance of green leaves and meadow-grass. The frame houses—some of the more pretentious topped off with the mansard roofs which were the architectural rage when many of Azalia's present residences came into being—all stood far back from the street, half hidden by rose and lilac bushes behind the low picket-fences.

Crunching his way over the cinder-path on the right-hand side of the street for twenty yards or so, the young man stopped suddenly. He had

heard a canary singing vigorously ever since he turned the corner, and the smile had deepened on his face, for he knew where the bird was, even before he made it out, in its brass cage, hanging under a porch nearly smothered by a crimson rambler. He placed his hand on a garden-gate that had swung open across the path, and listened.

"I thought I couldn't be mistaken," he murmured. "It *is* Adelina."

Clear and sweet, high above the notes of the canary, but always in harmonious cadence, arose a continuous trill in a girl's fresh young voice. It was a challenge, which the bird took up at once. Louder and louder he sang, but always the trill accompanied him, every accent distinct, liquid and true. Sometimes the tones from the two singers were so nearly of the same volume that one seemed to be a mere shading of the other. Then the canary warbled a dozen or so of long, full notes, while the girl's cadenza, rising and falling rhythmically, made a background of gorgeous tone-color, like a Turner picture dissolved into music. So the duet went on, and John Raymond, leaning on the swaying wooden gate, wondered vaguely why there was a sub-conscious twinge of pain in the pleasure it gave him.

"I suppose it is because music usually has that

effect," he concluded, as he turned into the garden to which the gate belonged.

As he went up the garden-path he glanced across to where a girl's white summer dress shimmered among the crimson blossoms on the porch where the canary hung. He hoped for a moment that she would see him. But she didn't, so he went on to the house and up to his room, to get the dust of the white road out of his clothes and himself. John Raymond and Adelina Von Hagen were next-door neighbors.

It was half an hour later when Raymond, leisurely completing his toilet, heard a gate slam, and he peeped through the slats of his sun-blind in idle curiosity. Three men were walking through the garden to the rose-covered porch next door. One of them, a stout individual, of pompous mien, whose white waistcoat thrust itself aggressively forward, like a show-window of prosperity, and whose dome-like head, under a very wide-brimmed soft hat, seemed to exhale judicial wisdom, marched a little in advance of his companions.

"'Squire Morgan, eh?" said Raymond to himself. "With Doctor Simmons and Franz Ehrhardt. What can they be after, coming in a body this way? Oh, yes! They are the music committee. Going to give Professor Von Hagen some instructions

about the music for next Sunday, I suppose. There's liable to be some music right there, in the house. The Professor won't submit to their dictation forever. He maintains—and he is right—that the organist should make up his own music programme. Some of these days the old man will kick the committee out of his house and resign."

He smiled at the thought of the short-tempered Von Hagen dealing thus summarily with 'Squire Morgan, and returned to the mirror to finish the interrupted operation of adjusting his necktie. It took him a long time, as neckties often do. He was giving the knot a final impatient tug, when he heard Adelina's voice. She was calling, softly:

"John, come here—will you?"

Would he? He would have jumped out of the window to her when she called him by name in that tone, and he threw open the slatted shutters with a bang. She was leaning over the fence separating the two gardens. When she saw him she put her two hands to her pretty mouth, megaphone fashion, and said, in the manner of one making a public announcement, in a loud whisper:

"Behold the new soprano of St. Jude's."

Down the stairs he went, three at a time, reached the garden, and, vaulting over the palings, was by her side while she still looked up at the

window, wondering why he had disappeared so suddenly. At least, she said she was wondering. But if she didn't know that John Raymond would lose no time in coming to her, as she stood there, all fluffy and bewitching, awaiting him, then she must have forgotten all he had ever taught her. She was a good excuse for any young man's tumultuous haste. With her plump arms extended from the short lace sleeves, as she grasped the top of the fence, her cheeks flushed with pleasant excitement, and the red-gold glory of the dying afternoon glinting her hair, Adelina Von Hagen was a vision which might have fascinated a far less impressionable personage than this young country doctor.

"So that's what the music committee came for?" he panted, for haste had shortened his breath. "I congratulate you, Addie. I saw them going in, but I supposed they wanted to see your father."

"That's what *he* thought, and he had bristled up as he always does when he sees them coming. You know, he doesn't care for the organ—and he hates the music committee. But he says there isn't a living in teaching the violin, and the salary from St. Jude's is useful. If it were not for that he would have resigned years ago. Now I shall

be able to help him. They are to pay me a hundred dollars a year. A lot of money—isn't it?"

"Not for such a voice as yours?"

"Do you really think my voice is good, John?"

"It isn't a question of thinking. Everybody in Azalia knows it is magnificent," he declared, emphatically. Then he added, with a hardly-perceptible tightening of the lips, "for sacred music."

"Why do you say that?" she asked, quickly. "Don't you think I can sing anything but hymns, psalms and anthems?"

John Raymond looked troubled, and there was a marked pause before he replied, in gentle reproach:

"How could I think that, when I hang over the piano to hear your ballads at every opportunity?"

"Ballads? Oh, yes," she returned, indifferently. "But what about the arias from the operas? Don't you care for them? I sang Margherita's 'Jewel Song' for you the other evening, and 'Di Tale Amor,' from 'Il Trovatore,' and I thought you were pleased."

"So I was. You seemed to throw your whole soul into the music."

"I did. I always do. My mother used to sing them both. Margherita and Leonora were her fav-

orite parts. I have heard her say that when she stepped forward to the footlights in either of those characters it seemed as if the whole great audience were holding out their arms to take her to their bosoms. Oh, it must have been glorious! To be a famous prima donna, impersonating the heroines of romance, and telling their stories in the thrilling music of Gounod, Verdi, Mozart, Rossini, Wagner and all the others. To wear splendid dresses and flashing jewels. To meet Lohengrin in an enchanted palace, or to soar in the clouds with the Valkyrie. To hear the crash of applause as you come before the curtain, and to know it is all for you. What is singing in a church choir compared with that?"

"The church choir is safer," he said, coldly.

She turned on him with blazing eyes, and he saw, with a strange, unexplainable fear, that there was a determination in their blue-gray depths which might be more than a match for his own some day. If ever there should come a battle of will against will—his against hers—with the fate of one or both on the issue, which would be the victor? He could not tell. Again and again he confessed to himself, in the second or two before she spoke, that he could not tell.

"You are reflecting on my mother," she said, at last, in low, tense tones.

"I am not, Adelina," he protested, piteously—and, indignant as she was, she could not but see that he suffered. "I am thinking only of the girl I love. I know that, though you are pleased to be chosen soprano of St. Jude's choir, it does not satisfy your ambition. You cannot keep your mind away from the stage. It is because I see and know this that I say things to offend you. But, surely you understand that I don't do it intentionally?"

The anger had died out of her eyes, and she put one of her soft white hands into his strong brown ones for a moment. Then, as they walked slowly along, among the flower-beds, she stooped and plucked a pansy, which she placed against her lace sleeve.

"Don't you think the velvety purple and dull yellow look pretty on white?" she asked, smiling.

"Beautiful," was his answer. But, as he spoke, he was looking at her face, and not at the flower on her sleeve.

"I love pansies," she went on. "The perfume is so delicate, and there are such dainty fancies associated with them. 'Heart's-ease' is one of their names, you know. I have heard that, when one is over-ambitious—discontented, distressed, longing

for something utterly beyond reach—a cluster of pansies laid over the heart will quiet it, and bring tranquility, if not contentment."

John Raymond gazed at her for a moment, a world of adoration in his eyes. Then, stooping, he broke off a dozen of the brilliant blossoms, and, arranging them in a loose bouquet with a deftness that belonged to his growing skill as a surgeon, gave them to her, saying, with a grave smile:

"You might try the experiment, Adelina."

"I will," she answered, as she pinned the pansies on her corsage. Then, softly, to herself: "Heart's-ease? Not through pansies, I am afraid."

"What did you say, Adelina?"

"Nothing," was her quiet response. "But there go the music committee, out of the gate. They said, after they had told me of my appointment, that they might as well have a talk to dad about his music for next Sunday. Let's hear what he has to say about them. It will be interesting, I am sure."

John Raymond was too deep in thought to answer. They went up to the crimson-garlanded porch in silence. The canary had ceased to sing.

## CHAPTER II

"And now I know that in your music's sweetness
Your mother's hallowed influence has a part."

That John Raymond ever could sympathize with Adelina's deep-seated longing for an operatic career was out of the question. He had inherited a prejudice against the stage which caused him to regard it habitually from one narrow angle. He read every criticism of the theatre and its people that came in his way, and, no matter how bitter and illogical the arraignment, he never hesitated to accept it as gospel. His father—a man of stern morals and afflicted with a ferocious piety, dangerously near bigotry—abhorred the theatre with a vicious intensity only possible to a really good man. It was of record that once he had gone through a howling blizzard to a town nearly a hundred miles away, to attend a Sunday-school Christmas-tree entertainment, but had come back without taking part in it, because it was held in the opera house. What wonder that, with such a parent, John Raymond regarded the stage as the

hotbed of all evil? Carrie, his sister, the only other member of the household, naturally assumed that her father and brother were right, and hated the stage more than they did, without exactly knowing why.

Adelina Von Hagen, on the other hand, had been reared in her early childhood in an atmosphere of art which found its fullest expression before the footlights. Her mother had been a petted prima donna in Italy, and had come to America to win fresh triumphs. But Love, the rascal, who enjoys nothing so much as playing the mischief with human ambition, put Heinrich Von Hagen, a well-looking young German, into the orchestra, as first violin. Not only did he admire the beautiful Italian girl, but he determined to marry her. He observed, at rehearsals, that the leading tenor, Luigi Golfanti, was paying court to her, desperately and in her native tongue. Von Hagen did not speak good Italian, but he made up his mind, after due deliberation, that the tenor, handsome as he was, and notwithstanding that he had the advantage of coming from her own country, could be driven off the field, and in his stolid Teutonic way, he pressed his suit so effectively with her that, at the end of the season, they were married. Perhaps she loved the young German. The chances are that she did,

finding his slow, phlegmatic wooing fascinating in its very contrast with her own passionate Southern nature. Such fancies are not uncommon.

Heinrich Von Hagen had not been blind to the pecuniary advantage of becoming the husband of a young woman whose voice was literally golden. Indeed, some people—Luigi Golfanti among them —did not hesitate to say that his affections were enlisted as much in her large salary as in herself. However that may have been, it was not for long that he was privileged to share in his wife's earnings. Within a year a girl-baby came, and when, one day three months later, Von Hagen impatiently commanded the mother to sing one of the most florid arias in her repertoire, while he played the accompaniment, he was horrified to find that most of the power had faded from her voice. She could still sing, but not with the commanding volume and technique which had made her fame. Again and again he thumped the piano, as she tried selection after selection, each easier than the one before it. At the end of an hour of agonizing endeavor they both knew that no longer could she hope to fill the brilliant *rôles* which had once been so easy. She might be equal to small, insignificant parts, but never more would she hold the centre of the stage as a prima donna.

They called the baby Adelina—after a dear friend of the mother's who had in the meantime become the wife of Luigi—and, in her delight in her infant, the dethroned diva almost forgot her artistic downfall. Not so her husband. He regarded the loss of her money-making ability as somehow her fault, and he never forgave her. He made her teach music and occasionally take a chorus engagement in opera, when she could get it, never heeding what was obvious to others—that her health was slowly, but surely, declining, as he spurred her on to efforts clearly beyond her strength.

One afternoon, eight years from the day Adelina was born, she called the little girl to her as she lay on the sofa, kissed her feebly and asked her to play her Czerny exercises.

"Don't stop if I fall asleep, dear," she said. "Your playing won't disturb me."

"Very well, mamma."

Adelina was still playing when her father came into the room, from a rehearsal, and angrily told her she would wake her mother with her noise. But the piano did not wake her. Nothing ever did—in this world.

It was a year after her mother's death when Adelina's father settled down in Azalia. They

wanted an organist at St. Jude's Church, and Heinrich Von Hagen, with whom things had not been going well, offered himself and was accepted, at a salary about equal to the wages his wife had paid her maid in the days of her prosperity. He added to his income by teaching the violin, although he never had many pupils at one time. The difficulties presented by that elusive instrument dismayed the Azalians, and most of the young people with musical leanings preferred to stick to the melodeon, as their parents had stuck before them.

Among the few who, under Professor Von Hagen's instructions, labored to conquer the diabolical perplexities of "bowing," and to unravel the mysteries of the various "positions" on the fingerboard, without setting his own teeth on edge, was John Raymond—familiarly known, at that period of his existence, as "Jacky." To say truth, he was not a promising pupil. Many a rap on the knuckles did Professor Von Hagen bestow with the back of his bow, accompanied by a gutteral expletive in his native German, and Jacky Raymond would have given it all up long before he did but for the encouragement of little Adelina. She liked the boy, and, as she was not old enough to be ashamed of showing her preference for an individual of the opposite sex, she would spend hours with him, listen-

ing, with hypocritical, but affectionate, admiration, to his wretched sawing. How much, with her delicate musical ear, she suffered, she never told him. He always played flat.

John Raymond was musing on that far-away time of his violin studies as he and Adelina strolled up the garden-path to the porch with the crimson ramblers, on this sweet June afternoon. He was sure now, as he looked back through the vistas of the years, that she had made him jealous by talking about the stage even then. She had always wanted to be a great singer, and he recalled how she had once told him, with childish faith in the prophetic truth of the vision, that she had dreamed her mother came to her in the night and promised to be with her when she walked on the stage to sing Leonora for the first time.

He was startled out of his reverie by stumbling against the steps of the porch, and Adelina laughingly offered him "A penny for your thoughts, Mr. Raymond."

"I was only thinking how pleased all your friends will be to know that you are to sing in St. Jude's choir," he answered, awkwardly.

"You didn't look pleased. There was a frown on your face."

"That was not a frown," he said—and he was

smiling now. "It was only an involuntary contraction of the facial muscles, the outward evidence of mental concentration."

She might have argued the point, but there was no opportunity. As she had anticipated, her father had some interesting remarks to make about the music committee, and he made them voluminously. For twenty minutes he held forth on the insolence of men who knew nothing about music presuming to offer suggestions to one who had made the science a life study. He was still growling when Raymond went to supper, after telling the girl he would be back at half-past seven to take her to Professor Cooper's lecture in the Town Hall.

As the young doctor paused on the threshold of his home, he wished there was someone inside to whom he could turn for sympathy in his misgivings about Adelina. But he knew better than to mention them either to his father or sister. It had fallen to him to defend Adelina vigorously more than once, when the former chose to utter one of his favorite philippics against the stage, and had held up the girl as one in danger of being drawn to everlasting perdition by its infernal influence. So the main topic over the supper table was the comparatively safe one of Professor Cooper's prom-

ised demonstrations of animal magnetism and telepathy that evening.

"You are going, of course, father?" said John Raymond, at the end of a dissertation on mind-reading and mental suggestion which he flattered himself must be convincing.

"No, I shall not go," replied Raymond senior, with the impressiveness that made everything he said seem weighty, even when it was only "Pass the prunes."

"Why not?"

"Because I do not believe these pretended phenomena of animal magnetism, hypnotism, telepathy and so forth have any sound scientific basis. Moreover, I fear they verge on impiety. Professor Cooper I regard as a charlatan, whom I could not conscientiously encourage by my presence. Therefore, I shall not attend his lecture."

Carrie glanced wistfully at John, and he, like a kind brother, as he was, immediately asked her if she would not go with him.

"If papa does not object," she ventured, timidly, and not too hopefully.

For a few moments Mr. Raymond did not make known his dictum. He believed in the chastening beneficence of uncertainty. Finally, with a pious uplifting of his eyes, as if he were calling on

the angels to gaze upon him as a long-suffering and indulgent parent, he said, solemnly:

"I will waive my objections if you feel you can afford to waste your time on such nonsense."

The truth was that this estimable man's curiosity had been aroused as to what Professor Cooper really could accomplish in the obscure sciences in which he was said to be an authority, and he knew he should be able to draw from Carrie, when she returned, a circumstantial account of all that was said and done, to the minutest detail. That his son's report would be brief and unsatisfactory was equally certain.

"Well, hurry up, Carrie," admonished John, as his sister ran away to her bedroom. "You'll find me outside."

He was glad to get into the flower-scented outer air again, for his home, and particularly his father, depressed him. He drew a long breath as he made his way around to the Von Hagens' garden, to see if Adelina was ready, thus giving Carrie time to put on her hat, as well as certain lace decorations for the neck and shoulders that smelled of tar and came out only on state occasions. He stopped by the side of the pansy-bed, where he had gathered the bouquet for Adelina in the afternoon.

"Heart's-ease!" he murmured. "If I thought

there were anything in that, I would pile them high on my breast every night. Heart's-ease!"

"Here I am, John. We're not late, I hope."

Adelina came tripping from the porch, and he saw that she wore the pansies he had given her. She was smiling gaily. There never was a cloud between them when she looked like that.

"I kept your pansies in water, and see how fresh they are," she rattled on. "I was determined to wear them this evening. Oh! There's Carrie! She's going with us, isn't she? I'm glad of that." Then, raising her voice: "Hello, Carrie! Hoo-hoo!"

Carrie had just appeared at her own door, with her hat and the afore-mentioned lace things on. She only smiled demurely, without speaking, as became a serious-minded young woman, in acknowledgment of Adelina's exuberant greeting, and came down the garden-path to join them at the gate.

"I hope this Professor will be funny, don't you?" said Adelina, impulsively kissing her on the cheek.

"I like anything that is instructive," was Carrie's calm reply. "But I do not care for frivolity. I hope to be greatly refreshed. That is why I am going."

"Oh, are there to be refreshments? Ice-

cream, and lemonade, and cake, I suppose. I didn't know."

"I meant mentally refreshed."

"Oh!"

Adelina had understood that, of course, but she never could resist the temptation to put a crimp in Carrie when she got too "starchy," as she confessed to John, in a whisper, when Miss Raymond marched a few paces ahead.

It seemed as if nearly everybody was going to the lecture. No sooner had John and the two young ladies turned the corner into Main street than they were caught in a strong current of humanity streaming towards the Town Hall. The lecture, it had been advertised, would be addressed to the intellectual portion of the public, and Azalia responded *en masse* to such an appeal. Azalia was a cultured community. If you doubted it, you could ask any of its adult inhabitants.

"There's Tommy Tittlemouse," said Adelina to John, in an undertone. "Don't walk too fast. They are only a little in front of us."

Sad to say, "Tommy Tittlemouse" was none other than the Reverend Thomas Treadhouse. But Adelina had known Tommy when he was an awkward hobbledehoy, of preternatural solemnity, and having given him his nickname then, she would not

change it now, even though he *had* become a minister.

"I suppose Susan wouldn't speak to me now. As if it's my fault I'm to have her place in the choir," she continued, taking Carrie into the conversation. "I'm sure—"

"Oh, yes, I forgot, Adelina," interrupted Carrie. "I congratulate you. My father heard of it from 'Squire Morgan, and he says it's an excellent selection. Papa likes you, you know. I hope you will find the position a pleasant one. But, of course, you never can tell. This is a world of disappointments."

Adelina shook herself involuntarily under this shower of verbal ice-water, and said she was glad that Mr. Raymond approved of the music committee's choice, that she would do her best, and that if the position should not prove altogether pleasant, she would try to endure it for the sake of the salary.

"Why, Miss Von Hagen, how *do* you do?" broke in a very stout woman, whose brick-red face made the crimson roses in her hat seem almost pale, as she waddled out of a doorway and stood directly in their path.

"Good evening, Mrs. Potter. Going to the lecture?"

"I certainly am," replied the stout woman, who was the better half of the sonorous undertaker and sexton so well thought of by the sages accustomed to air their wisdom at Rundell's. "I reckon it will be well worth going to. My husband says this Professor Cooper can put his brains into anyone he likes. I hope he won't try it on me. I've got a set of my own that suit me very well. I shouldn't want a strange man's brains in my head. I don't think it would be a respectable thing to do to a married lady he'd never seen before. Nor to a single one, neither," she added, as a consistent after-thought. "Te-he! Te-he!"

Mrs. Potter's voice was very thin, in contrast with her ample person, and her tittering giggles were mere splinters of sound that suggested anything but honest mirth. She was one of the busiest members of St. Jude's Sewing Circle.

"I hear they've asked Mrs. Treadhouse for her resignation as soprano, and that you'll sing in her place after next Sunday," she went on. "Is that so?"

It was John Raymond who replied to Mrs. Potter, somewhat shortly: "Yes, that is so. Miss Von Hagen was told by the music committee this afternoon."

He tried to steer Adelina and his sister around

the good lady, for their sudden enforced halt had held up the whole procession on the narrow sidewalk, and there was a storm of angry protests all the way down the block that threatened to become a riot. But the undertaker's wife was not to be shaken off. She walked along with them, talking as she went.

"I'm thinking Mrs. Treadhouse will take it rather hard, and I allow as the preacher won't like it none too well, neither," she purred, comfortably, but with one doubtful eye on John Raymond, who was scowling fiercely. "You know, Adelina, there's folks in Azalia what's li'ble to object to you because your mother used to act out on the stage. Of course, that ain't none of your fault. A child ain't got no right to be blamed for her parents. That's what I up and says to my husband this very afternoon, when he come in and told me about you going to be paid for singing in church. My remark was, 'Well, Solomon, Addy Von Hagen can't help what her mother done,' says I, and he says, says he, 'That's sound philosophy, Hannah.' And I reckon it is, too. What *was* it your mother used to do in the the-ayter? I never heard all the rights of it."

Mrs. Solomon Potter put this question as loudly as her squeaky voice would permit, for two other ladies,—Mrs. Wilkins, and the principal of

the public school, Miss Crupp, both of whom belonged to the Sewing Circle,—had come up, hungry for gossip.

John Raymond pressed Adelina's arm gently, as a warning to her to be silent, for he read mischief in the tight lips and spiteful eyes of the newly-arrived Sewing Circlers, but the girl was not to be restrained.

"My mother was an opera singer—a prima donna," she flamed out.

"An op'ry-singer?" echoed Mrs. Wilkins. "I once went to a op'ry in Chillicothe—Wilkins didn't want to take me, but I went anyhow—and it was somethin' scand'lous. The op'ry was called 'The Jolly Female Divers.' There was a lot of young women, all painted up, singin' an' dancin', with nothin' on but a—"

"Miss Von Hagen, did your mother wear tights on the stage?" suddenly boomed Miss Crupp, who was forty years of age and a basso.

That was all. John Raymond could stand it no longer. Taking Adelina and his sister each by an elbow, he charged the Sewing Circle and forced his way past them, knocked a few boys off the sidewalk, jostled the Reverend Thomas Treadhouse —apologizing immediately—and did not stop until he had reached the head of the narrow staircase

leading into the Town Hall, where a pale and pimply youth was taking tickets at the door.

The pimply young man was business manager for Professor Cooper. Among his duties was that of submitting himself as a "subject" for hypnotism when no one in the audience would volunteer. He was "very receptive," the Professor said, and it was a fact that the business manager, when in a hypnotic state, went through more fantastic performances, and therefore provoked more wonder and laughter, than ever were contributed by an outsider. The business manager's name was Boner—Claude Boner.

"You'll have to get tickets down stairs," said this functionary to Raymond, distractedly, for he was overworked and flustered.

As he spoke Claude Boner thrust forward a knee, to prevent a boy sneaking into the hall without paying, and at the same moment took tickets from 'Squire Morgan for that portly gentleman himself, for Mrs. Morgan, who was tall and slim, and for the two Misses Morgan, both of whom were built like their father.

It was anything but an easy task to descend the steep, poky staircase, since besides that people were coming up in a solid mob, several boys were amusing themselves by alternately sliding down the

banister and running up the stairs under the arms and among the legs of the grown-up folk. The urchins accompanied their manœuvres with snatches of the latest popular song to reach Azalia, yelled at the very top of their strident young voices.

Raymond found Professor Cooper himself selling tickets through a square opening from a very small wooden cupboard which seemed a tight fit for the gifted scientist, spare of figure as he was. The Professor perspired freely—as well he might, considering his situation, shut up in a breathless box on a warm June evening—but he was not unhappy, for tickets were fifty cents apiece, and they were going so fast that he saw he would have a large audience.

When Raymond had fought his way up stairs again, he piloted Adelina and Carrie past the harassed Claude Boner into the low-ceiled hall, and, by good luck, discovered three empty chairs near a window, which had been given up by three ladies, one of whom was Miss Crupp, because they were afraid of "the draught." Miss Crupp would have closed the window if she could, taking the risk of half suffocating everybody. But the casement was old and rickety, and could not be moved save by the elderly woman—at home with a tooth-

ache at that moment—who swept out the hall when she happened to think of it, and who alone knew the window's secret. So Miss Crupp and her cronies moved to the other side of the room, and John Raymond commandeered the three chairs.

Adelina, dropping into her seat, caught the eye of Mrs. Treadhouse, who smiled and bowed ostentatiously.

"She won't let you think she is disappointed, if she can help it, but she's boiling within," observed Carrie. "I know Susan Treadhouse. She can't blind me."

And as it has been well and often said that no one understands a woman like a woman, and as Miss Raymond was not devoid of the quick perception generally credited to her sex, it is to be feared there *was* something "catty" in Mrs. Treadhouse's friendly recognition of the young girl who would supplant her in St. Jude's choir.

There was a ten minutes' interval, filled in with buzzing conversation and shrill boyish cries, and then Professor Theophilus Cooper, in what the Azalians called "a full dress suit," wriggled his way down one side of the crowded room, past a line of standing people plastered against the wall, and reached the platform. He bowed in response to a burst of hand-clapping—boisterously prolonged by five snickering boys, sitting together, free from parental restraint, in a front row—solemnly drank a little water, and plunged into his lecture.

## CHAPTER III

"It is not madness
That I have uttered: bring me to the test."

Professor Cooper was anything but the charlatan Mr. Raymond had called him. On the contrary, it was evident that he had given to the subject of mental phenomena extended and intelligent study, and as he had the faculty of putting the information he possessed into simple language, with such terrific words as "psychopannychism," "hysterology," "cerebralism" and "psychophysical" thrown in only just often enough to prove his erudition, the preliminary discourse did not bore his hearers so much as some of the more thoughtful of them had feared it would.

But, after all, it was the expectation of witnessing experiments and demonstrations that had attracted the large audience, and Professor Cooper knew that as well as anyone. Therefore, after occupying twenty minutes' time in expounding the principles of mental suggestion, he announced that he would endeavor to give an illustration of the psychic power of one human being over another if

some gentleman would step upon the platform to assist him. There was a pause, during which the Professor, with a patient smile, sent an inquiring gaze roaming over the audience.

"I wonder if it would hurt?" was the whispered query that rippled through the hall, and, as no one could answer it authoritatively, there was no response to the Professor's invitation, although he repeated it twice.

This did not disturb him, however. He had not been a public lecturer for years without acquiring an extensive knowledge of human nature, and he was satisfied that he would have all the Azalians on the platform he wanted, and more, too, when once he had broken through their shyness. To get things going, he made a sign, unnoticed by the audience, to Claude Boner, his business manager, who was standing just inside the carefully-closed door, waiting to be called. Claude shuffled down one of the side-aisles with affected diffidence, and stepped up to the side of the Professor as if he never had seen him before. Some of the audience recognized Claude as the pimply young man who had taken their tickets at the door, but many did not, never having looked as high as his face as they passed in—after the manner of the public the civilized world over. If the "man on the door" is a

human being, and not merely a slot machine, few persons admit the fact. Professor Cooper had observed this peculiarity of human nature, too. Therefore, he received Claude as an entire stranger, sat him in a chair, mesmerized him, and told him he was a kitten, playing with a ball.

Mr. Boner obediently dropped upon his hands and knees, and sported with an imaginary ball in such a life-like way, that, as Adelina whispered to John Raymond, it was hard to believe the young man's father was not an old tom-cat. The kitten performance went on for a few minutes, and then the Professor turned his "subject" successively into a carpenter sawing wood, a spirited horse and a base ball player. Claude Boner showed himself a clever mimic. As the carpenter, he sawed at the seat of a chair with the edge of his hand, making, with his mouth, the sound of a saw going through a board, knots and all; as the horse, he curvetted, reared and neighed, and, as the ball-player, he made a tremendous hit to right-field, rushed completely around the platform, and wound up with a sensational slide to the home-plate which drove all the boys, and many of the men, in the hall, frantic with delight.

"He's fast asleep, you know," remarked the

Professor, gravely. "He doesn't know what he is doing. Now, I'll wake him."

A sharp slap on the shoulders, accompanied by a shout, brought Claude to himself, rubbing his eyes and looking sheepishly about him, as if he wondered what foolish things he might have done. During the laughter that shook the hall, the Professor's keen eye had noted several restless individuals here and there in the rows of chairs, and he was satisfied that some of them would come up to the platform. So he dismissed Claude with a courtly bow, saying:

"I thank you very much, sir, for your assistance in these scientific experiments, not only in my own name, but in that of this large and brilliant assemblage of really remarkable intellect and beauty."

He waved his hand to comprehend everybody in the hall, and each and every Azalian present took personal credit for one or other of the natural gifts bestowed upon them by the lecturer. It was an axiom of Professor Cooper's that you could not lay on the flattery too thick if you had your audience with you.

Claude Boner had hardly reached his own chair by the door when two half-grown youths, husky, sunbrowned and unimaginative, shuffled

forward, encouraged by numerous friends of their own sex and age, and grinned at the Professor.

"Them's the Barber boys, from Williams's farm," observed Daddy Wylie, who was in a front row, near the five snickering urchins, whence he had been taking the liveliest interest in the proceedings. "I'll bet he can't do nothin' with them, no more'n he could with me."

Daddy Wylie had not addressed anyone in particular, but his voice had reached Professor Cooper, who gave him a shock by saying, blandly: "If the gentleman who has just spoken will kindly step up here, I should like to test the influence of mental suggestion upon him. I realize that it will be very difficult to make an impression upon so powerful a mind, but, for that reason, the experiment will be all the more interesting. Won't you oblige me?"

The Professor leveled a long, lean forefinger at Daddy Wylie, and the old gentleman, taken entirely by surprise, found himself on his feet and moving toward the platform before the lecturer had finished speaking. Mechanically, he took a chair in front of the table on which stood the white pitcher of ice-water and the glass, and Professor Cooper politely requested the "Barber boys" to sit at the back for a few moments. Then the lecturer

gazed intently into the eyes of Mr. Wylie, resolved to subdue him if it could be done. The defiance of the old man had put him on his mettle. There was deathly silence.

"If he can control old Wylie, it will convince me," murmured John Raymond, below his breath.

Daddy Wylie did not appear so confident, now that he was on the open battle-field, face to face with an enemy whose weapons were altogether strange to him. In the shelter of the auditorium he could criticize without fear of reprisal, but here it was different. His eyes twinkled anxiously behind his spectacles, and the straggly gray tuft on his chin wagged fast, as he masticated his tobacco with nervous rapidity.

"I don't think you can stop chewing tobacco," said the Professor, at last, when he had been staring fixedly into Daddy Wylie's eyes for more than a minute.

It seemed much longer to the breathless spectators.

"I don't want to stop it," replied Dad, with a defiant chuckle.

There were sympathetic giggles from some of the women, and the two "Barber boys," behind the table, whose faces had expressed the deepest awe

during these mysterious doings, grinned again. The Professor was serious.

"You can't stop chewing that tobacco," he said, sharply.

"Yes, I can, if I want ter."

"Then stop it. But I say you can't."

Dad Wylie's jaws maintained their steady grinding, with the tuft on his chin moving rhythmically up and down. One might have supposed him to be enjoying the tobacco with the keenest relish, only that there had crept into his eyes a quiver of mingled doubt and fear, which increased as the Professor looked into them closer and repeated:

"You can't stop chewing that tobacco."

The old man raised his two arms stiffly from the shoulders, as if he had no elbow-joints, but, somehow, he could not get his hands to his chin, as appeared to be his desire, while his jaw kept on working with the mechanical strokes of a driving-rod in a well-oiled engine. The frightened look in his eyes intensified. His gaze never removed itself from the face of the Professor, who, in his turn, seemed to be reading the very soul of the tobacco-chewing Dad.

There was something decidedly uncanny in it all. It was obvious that Daddy Wylie was not champing his tobacco only because he liked it. Not

that he did not often keep on that operation for many minutes at a time without a break. But ordinarily he could stop if he chose to do so. Now he could not. There was the horror of it. The cool, confident stranger, a sardonic smile gradually creeping around the corners of his compressed lips and cutting dry vertical lines in his pale cheeks, held him in his thrall. Dad could not have told what it was that compelled him to keep on chewing. He only knew that, while he would have liked to cease, if only to shift his tobacco from one side of his mouth to the other, he had no more power to do it than if his jaw had been the property of someone else. He could not even change its speed. The same deliberate, regular action with which he extracted solace from his quid under every-day, sane conditions, was maintained now at the will of this insolent Professor.

Would he never be allowed to stop? Dad had been forced to the conclusion that, unless the influence which dominated him was removed, he might have to continue chewing until he dropped from exhaustion. Even then his jaw might be obliged to keep on working. It was awful. Then, how the people were laughing at him. He never would hear the last of it. He—

Suddenly, as the Professor turned away and

smiled complacently at the audience, Dad's jaw stopped its labor, and the wisp of gray hair was stilled for the first time since he had been on the platform. Dad put one hand to his chin and stroked it reflectively. Then, very cautiously, he bit his tobacco once, and stopped. He tried again, closing and opening his mouth three times in quick succession. Yes, it was all right. He could control his own jaw again. He worked at the tobacco for perhaps ten seconds, and then ceased with a jerk. That satisfied him. He could chew or stop chewing, as it pleased him. He was his own man once more.

Without looking at the Professor, or anyone else, the chastened Daddy Wylie left the platform, made straight for the door, and clumped down stairs to the deserted street. There he put a fresh cube of plug tobacco into his mouth, and, as he closed his teeth upon it, declared, emphatically, to the stars and just-rising moon:

"By gravy! I didn't think he could do it."

Most of those who had witnessed Dad Wylie's discomfiture were disposed to regard it as a good joke—that and nothing more. But John Raymond sat thoughtful amid the uproar of mirth. He was convinced that, however much trickery there might have been in the performance of the ticket-taker—

and he regarded the antics of Claude Boner on the platform with more than suspicion—Dad Wylie's subjugation had been bona fide. He had kept on chewing his tobacco because he could not stop. Raymond was quite sure of that. Whether the Professor's control had been exerted through telepathic suggestion, hypnotism, mesmerism, or any other of the strange forces which he himself had found so fascinating a study, he could not tell. Dad might have yielded merely through nervousness. Whatever the influence used by Professor Cooper, it had conquered the old man's stubborn will, and Raymond wanted to learn more about it.

The unceremonious departure of Daddy Wylie did not end the entertainment. The "Barber boys" were tried, but made indifferent "subjects"—perhaps because they lacked imagination. Then others came forward, dozens of them—men, women and children—all eager for an experience they never had hoped to have, and which was none the less attractive because it would afford, perhaps, a glimpse into another world. This was the idea that had gained ground, especially among the feminine element, and there were few women in the hall who did not offer to put themselves into Professor Cooper's hands. Those few held back only because they were afraid. So more people went up to the

platform than the Professor could deal with, and when, at eleven o'clock, he announced that it was too late to make any more demonstrations, there were at least a score of disappointed fair ones, including the deep-voiced Miss Crupp.

"Well, I hope you are both convinced that there is something in mental suggestion," said Raymond, afterward, as, with his sister on one arm and Adelina on the other, he flying-wedged his way through the wonder-stricken, gossiping throngs outside the hall.

"I thought it rather silly," declared Adelina. "And rough. I felt sorry for Mr. Wylie. Besides, there should have been some music. It would have brightened it up."

"Lectures are not supposed to be bright," said Carrie, rebukingly. "I have learned a great deal to-night, and I am grateful. I must say, though, that I never saw such a hat as Miss Crupp had on. All the trimming was from the hat she wore the winter before last, and that green ribbon used to be yellow before she had it dyed in the spring. I know it by the black ink-spot. She's put a bow over it to hide it, but I saw it at once when she moved away from that chair."

Carrie mentioned other millinery she had observed, and, as none of it met with her unqualified

approval, it kept her talking until they reached their own quiet street, where the moonlight was working black-and-white embroidery on the picket-fences under the elms. The trio stopped at the Raymond garden gate, and Carrie said:

"I'll run up to the house, John, while you take Adelina home. Good night, Addie. I'm sorry you didn't like the lecture. It has given me a great deal of food for serious thought. Good night."

While Miss Raymond hurried indoors, to tell her father as much about the lecture as she could recall, her brother and Adelina walked slowly to the next gate and stood there, hand in hand. There was no particular reason for his holding her hand. It just happened so. He had seized the top of the gate, to pull it open, and had met her fingers as they clasped one of the pickets with the same purpose. He had closed his fingers around hers and drawn them away, saying:

"I'll open the gate. It's too heavy for you."

Humbug! The crazy old gate had hung there for twenty years, and every drop of weight-giving sap had dried out long ago. It was almost as light as if it were made of cardboard. Moreover, its hinges were new—had been put on by Azalia's leading carpenter less than a week before—and were so well oiled that they operated without a

ghost of a creak and were practically automatic. Even the light touch of the girl's finger-tips had swung the gate open an inch or two. But any excuse would do for John Raymond as he looked down at her pretty face, dimpling in the shadow-flecked moonlight, under the waving elms. He had her hand, and there was no reason why he should let it go.

The voices of the home-going people on Main street came to them in a musical murmur, the sharpness of the women's tones and the growls of the men all fused by distance into a low harmony. There was a nightingale singing somewhere. A select company of frogs were holding a *conversazione* down by the creek. And through it all murmured the rustling of leaves, the hum of insects—the thousand-and-one sounds that give tune to a midsummer night.

"I must go in," said Adelina, when he had stood holding her hand for some moments, resisting with difficulty an impulse to put his arm around her waist. "It is very late, and father may be waiting for me."

"Don't you think he has gone to bed?"

"Yes, but he may be awake, listening for me to come in. Good night."

She moved slightly, as if to open the gate, but

did not draw her fingers out of his grasp. He was afraid she might, so he tightened his hold. He wanted to say something before they parted, and he felt that the words would come easier if he kept her hand in his.

"I am going to walk up to the porch with you," he told her. "There might be some stranger—a tramp—hiding behind the rose-bushes."

She laughed softly.

"There hasn't been a tramp in Azalia this summer, John. 'Squire Morgan set so many of them to breaking stones last year, that they don't come now. The 'Squire says they've all heard what they may expect, and they have blotted Azalia from their visiting-list."

He remaind silent for a few moments, and when he did speak it was not in answer to her playful remarks about tramps, but a sudden question which had no reference to anything they had been saying, and therefore took her by surprise:

"Addie, don't you think you could be happy in Azalia all your life, even though there are no theatres here?"

He bent down quickly, trying to make out the expression of her face through the confusion of dancing shadows. It showed nothing but amusement, as she replied with another query:

"Do you think you ever could become the great physician and surgeon you want to be—and will be—without studying in city hospitals and attending lectures in the famous medical colleges?"

"I asked you my question because I love you, Adelina."

"And I didn't answer it because I—"

"Yes?"

"Oh, nothing. I really must go in."

There was no impatience in her tones, and the amused smile still shone in her eyes, as she opened the gate with her free hand, while he still held the other. He wished she had finished her sentence, and yet, as he told himself, perhaps her breaking it off was indicative of the uncertainty of her mind. If only there were some way of bringing her to a decision—some way! He let go of her hand.

"How sweet the roses are," she said, softly. "You get the scent of them so much stronger in the evening than in daylight. And the pansies! They seem to be fighting with the roses for notice. Oh, I am right on the edge of the pansy-bed. Another step and I might have walked over them. That would have been dreadful—to crush heart's-ease out of existence, wouldn't it?"

Whatever his opinion, he did not express it,

and as they stopped at the foot of the three broad steps leading to the porch, she turned to him, and taking both of his hands in hers, whispered:

"Good night." Then, after a pause: "Don't worry. I'm not worth it. No girl is."

But he did not agree with her in this, and long after she had gone to her own pretty room, where her mother's old opera scores were piled up on a table close to her bedside, and where the sweet breath of the pansies came all night through the open window, John Raymond sat in Professor Cooper's room at Granger's Hotel, talking earnestly.

"Then you believe it possible to influence at will, by this science, a mind bent for years in a certain direction?" asked Raymond, at last, as he arose to go.

"Undoubtedly," replied the Professor.

"Permanently?"

"I do not say that."

John Raymond left the hotel and walked slowly home. He could not follow Adelina's advice. He was still worrying.

## CHAPTER IV

**"There let the pealing organ blow**
**To the full-voiced choir below."**

It was Thursday when the music committee announced to Adelina that she had been chosen to sing soprano parts and solos at St. Jude's, in place of Mrs. Treadhouse. All three members of the committee had been at Professor Cooper's lecture that evening, and just as Adelina was leaving the hall 'Squire Morgan had worked his way to her in the crowd and advised her to go to the church the next night and notice how choir practice was conducted.

"You might get a pointer or two from Mrs. Treadhouse," the 'Squire had suggested. "She may not be much of a singer, but she knows how to hold her music-book, and there ain't no one going to beat her at bringing in 'A-h-h-men!' at the right time with the others."

"That's true," assented Dr. Simmons, who had been hurled over to them by the crush of home-

goers, most of them battling to get out as if the hall were on fire. "Mrs. Treadhouse has always kept the choir straight. If young Schwartz were to be the least bit too soon or too late with his tenor, I believe she would throw him clear out of the gallery."

Adolph Schwartz, who sang tenor in the choir on Sundays, but throughout the week acted as clerk and soda-water dispenser in Root's drug store, was yellow-haired and mild-mannered, and Dr. Simmons laughed as he pictured the surprised young man going head-first over the front of the gallery into one of the pews below. Adelina laughed, too, for Adolph was a perpetual annoyance to her in a small way. He was a persistent admirer, and having a high opinion of his personal attractions, never could understand a snub.

"I'll go to choir practice with my father to-morrow night," she told the 'Squire.

So, when Heinrich Von Hagen, on Friday evening, gathered up his church music, grumblingly —after putting his precious Amati, which he had been playing, into its battered case—and went down to the church to preside at the organ, Adelina accompanied him.

St. Jude's organ was an old-fashioned affair, with two banks of keys and a hand-pump for the

wind. It stood in the choir gallery, by the side of the pulpit, and the organist sat with his back to the faded red curtains which hid him from the congregation. A mirror over the music-desk enabled him to keep an eye on the minister, so that he could follow the service and always be ready to play when required. The choir had its row of four chairs on his right, between him and the pulpit. They, too, were screened behind red curtains when seated, but bobbed up into view when they got on their feet to sing.

Heinrich Von Hagen had several sources of annoyance in connection with his duties as organist. The worst of them all was the difficulty in obtaining an adequate and even supply of wind for the instrument. Solomon Potter, as the sexton, was responsible for the proper performance of the organ-bellows. He never had been able to find a steady operator, but was obliged to depend on the fugitive services of any youth who was willing to do the work for the modest remuneration allowed by the music committee. The tariff was twenty-five cents for each service on Sunday, and fifteen cents for choir practice on Friday.

The labor was very hard. Indeed there was a popular belief that no other organ in the United States had such a stiff, heavy pump-handle as this

one in St. Jude's Church. The "assistant organist," as the pumper was styled by the music committee, had to squeeze himself into a narrow, dusty space behind the organ, and there move a creaking wooden bar up and down as long as the music continued. On the wall, before his eyes, was the gauge. This consisted of a series of lateral strokes, numbered from "0" at the top to "15" at the bottom. A small oblong leaden weight, suspended on a string, ascended rapidly as the air was exhausted in the pipes, and it was the business of the "assistant organist" to see that the bottom of the weight stayed a long way below the "0." That meant he must continually pump, pump, pump. When a succession of loud chords were played, it was heartbreaking labor for the pumper, and even in ordinary passages the weight had a cruel habit of gliding swiftly to the top if, in his weariness, he stopped for a moment or two.

Since all the boys and young men in town were familiar with the severity of the toil, none of them would undertake it unless they were in sore need of money, and many a time was Solomon Potter obliged to climb into the little cupboard himself, to pump the organ full of wind and himself full of dust, because there was no one else to do it, and Von Hagen was raving at the keyboard. It

was so at this rehearsal, and Adelina fancied she could hear the sexton grunting and wheezing at his hated task all through the music.

Susan Treadhouse, who was in the church when they arrived, greeted Adelina with effusive affection, while Mlle. Marie Connor, the contralto (who taught singing and kept a millinery establishment in Buckeye street), and Saul Hunter, the basso, bowed somewhat distantly. They were not sure that it would please Mrs. Treadhouse if they were too warm toward the new soprano, her own enthusiastic welcome notwithstanding. Adolph Schwartz was more in awe of the pastor's wife than the others in the choir, but his desire to stand well with Adelina overcame his fear of Mrs. Treadhouse's censure, and he favored the girl with a series of his most killing smiles from beginning to end of the rehearsal.

Adolph Schwartz was short and slim, Mrs. Treadhouse of about the same height as Adolph, while Mlle. Marie Connor was tall, and Saul Hunter, eldest son of the farmer whose barn marked the turn of the pike, towered above the contralto, and was broad-shouldered in proportion. He worked hard on his father's farm on week-days, and the deep voice which served so well in the

choir was useful also in urging on plow-horses and shouting to hired men across ten-acre fields.

Adelina did not learn anything in particular at the rehearsal except that Mrs. Susan Treadhouse hated her, as a rival, with all the intensity of a small mind. This was evidenced when, her voice having broken as she strove to reach a high "A," Mrs. Treadhouse looked across to Von Hagen—fingering the keys dispassionately, while his eyes were glued to the music before him—and blurted, in vinegary accents:

"You ought to save this solo for Sunday week. It is the kind of thing that only an actress can do properly."

Heinrich Von Hagen shrugged his shoulders impatiently, and growled: "Hein! Sing."

Adelina could not prevent a quick flush spreading over her cheeks, but that was the only sign she gave of the cruel agony which shot through her. Not for herself alone would she have cared. But well she knew that the anæmic Susan had had her mother in mind, and that the taunt had been barbed, so that it would make a double wound in her breast, tearing ruthlessly through her dearest and most sacred memories.

Probably no one but Mrs. Treadhouse and the girl realized the significance of the thrust. Adolph

was smirking at Adelina. Mlle. Marie Connor was reviewing in her mind some important millinery details, and trying to decide whether she should trim her fall hat with feathers or flowers. As for Saul Hunter, he had been absorbed in the bass part of the trio he was to sing with the contralto and tenor ever since he had entered the gallery, to the exclusion of everything else. None of them had heeded the spiteful outbrust. Most likely they had not even heard it. After her first angry moment Mrs. Treadhouse regretted that she had lost her temper. She even smiled graciously at Adelina, as if to assure her that she had meant no covert attack in what she had said. But the girl, sore at heart, turned away, and without saying anything to her father, left the church and went home. Heinrich Von Hagen never missed her.

Adelina went to church on Sunday, and if she paid greater attention to the singing than to the rather heavy sermon, it was only natural. She had more personal interest in the methods of the choir of which she was so soon to be a part than in polemical theology as expounded by the Reverend Thomas Treadhouse. He was generally more soporific than convincing. Susan Treadhouse got through her solo somehow, not without a little trouble with that high "A," and the remainder of

the musical service was accomplished smoothly. Adelina decided that she would find it all very easy.

"Next Sunday you will be in the choir," John Raymond reminded her, as he joined her outside the church, ready to accompany her home.

The June sunshine was warm and grateful after the semi-gloom and chill within, for St. Jude's was built before the era of ultra-comfortable churches, especially in country towns, and there were threats of rheumatism and malaria in its damp brick walls and miasmatic cellar even in summer.

"Yes, but I shall not sing a solo. It would not be the soprano's turn, for one thing, and I am glad of it."

"The music would not be very difficult, would it?"

"No, but I want to become used to my surroundings before I sing alone. You must permit a little stage-fright even to a church chorister. Mr. Hunter will have a bass solo in the morning, and Miss Connor will sing in the evening. On the next Sunday morning I shall have to stand up before the critical congregation and endeavor to get through a solo without breaking on the 'A.'"

Well, of course, it was unkind in Adelina to refer to the vocal weakness of Susan Treadhouse.

But it is not pretended that this girl was superior to ordinary human emotions, and it must be admitted that she had reason for resentment.

"There is a strict code of ethics in church choirs, isn't there?" remarked John Raymond. "I suppose there would be trouble if anyone in the quartette were to sing a solo out of turn."

"It would mean a revolution, unless a special arrangement were made," she laughed. "I shall sing in the morning, instead of in the evening, but that is because Adolph Schwartz, to whom the morning solo belongs, insists on standing aside for me. It is considered more desirable to sing in the morning than the evening, and he solemnly swore that if I did not accept the morning for my first solo he would stay away and send a substitute, which would compel me to take the place of honor. So, what could I do?"

He looked at her, radiant in her shimmering summer frock, with a cluster of pansies nestling among the soft laces on her bosom, and her blue-gray eyes glancing demurely at him from beneath the wide brim of her white straw hat, and he could not help hating Adolph Schwartz, as he thought what a ravishing picture she would make behind the faded red curtains in the dingy old choir gallery.

When, on the following Sunday, he saw her in

her place in the quartette, as she stood up, for the first time, to join in the "Venite exultemus Domino," and her clear, ringing tones mingled with the others in the stirring exhortation, "O, come, let us sing unto the Lord!" he wondered vaguely whether it was wicked to liken her to an angel who had been permitted to descend to the earth for a space, to make it better and brighter. If this was a foolish thought, let it be remembered that John Raymond was very much in love with Adelina Von Hagen.

He did not entertain the thought very long, for even as he looked, a vision of an eager-faced young girl, but in the gorgeous robes and false jewels of the theatre, blotted out the real Adelina. She was singing, as earnestly as now, to some commonplace actor, whose only recommendation was the possession of a powerful, well-trained voice. He could have cried with the pain of it. Could it be possible that she would thus degrade her heavenly gift of song? And if she meant to do it, was there no way of rescuing her? Sooner or later, he knew, she would seek to shake off the safe, humdrum existence of this little corner of the world—so insignificant that it was not on many maps, even of Ohio alone—and go forth to conquer, as her mother had done more than twenty years before. Then,

perhaps, he would lose her. After all, was not that his principal objection? Perhaps; but he would not confess it even to himself. He was trying to argue it out in his mind when the last stanza of the anthem, in which he could hear Adelina's voice high above the others, seemed to demand by what right he dared to sit in judgment on her actions:

"For He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth: and with righteousness to judge the world and the people with His truth."

There was his answer. He felt it even before he had caught her eye for a flash of a second, as she joined in the "Amen." That look seemed to ask him whether he had noted the significance of the words—whether he understood that, if she was to be condemned, it must be by a much higher power than he. Perhaps she did not mean that. It may have been that her gaze rested upon him for an instant by accident, or that, if she had sought him purposely, it was to read in his face whether or not he was pleased with her first public effort as a member of St. Jude's choir. But he could place only one interpretation upon her glance, and it humbled him, as he felt, to his betterment. It brought to his mind a Scriptural injunction to which he had given too little heed in his life: "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

Mrs. Susan Treadhouse sat in a front pew, her hatchet face wearing an expression of resignation, but she never looked at Adelina. It may be that the sight of someone else in the place she had occupied for so long would have been too much for her equanimity, and might have brought on an outbreak and a scandal. So she watched her husband whenever the choir sang, only suffering her attention to wander during the sermon, when the quartette was out of sight behind the curtains. Withal she did not miss a note sung by Adelina.

What Mrs. Treadhouse thought of the new soprano's work was her own secret. What she said to the Reverend Thomas, in the privacy of their home, after the service, was: "If Adelina Von Hagen could spend a few years in Cincinnati, under a thoroughly competent teacher, and practice breathing exercises six hours a day all that time, she might eventually be able to sing. I don't say she would, but she might. There is some strength in her voice, but it is dreadfully harsh and untrained." Which was not only spiteful, but utterly untrue. Her husband was wise enough to nod tolerantly, without commiting himself in speech.

Adolph Schwartz, the tenor, sitting next to the soprano, as is customary, had the felicity of finding the places for her in her music-books, and, with

much tender whispering, giving her hints that were entirely superfluous, since she knew as much about it all as he did. But the opportunity to talk confidentially to her behind the red curtains was too precious to be lost. Adolph was of a poetical turn of mind, and he almost persuaded himself that they two were alone, as in a fairy coral grotto (the red curtains suggested the coral fancy), shut off from all the great coarse world, and in the close communion so sweet to kindred souls. The fact that Mlle. Marie Connor and the husky Saul Hunter were in the grotto with them, and that Adelina could not hide entirely the boredom she felt, did not disconcert Adolph in the least. She was his—for the time, and when afterward, as they all stood up to sing, he perceived John Raymond looking at him as if he would like to knock his well-groomed yellow head off, his bosom filled with holy joy. Let Raymond fume as he might, he could not come into the choir gallery, and Adelina would be Adolph's own for hours every Sunday, as she was to-day.

The morning service came to an end at last, and John lost no time in taking possession of Adelina, to the discomfiture of Adolph, who had inveigled her out of the side door reserved for the choir and minister. But Raymond was waiting

for her and took her as a matter of course, while Adolph trailed along in the rear with her father, who was not in good humor, for the pumping had been very bad.

"How do you like it, Adelina?" asked John Raymond, as they walked along by the white fences, under the elms. "Do you think you will tire of singing every Sunday?"

"Tire of it? Oh, John, I never could tire of singing, and it is rather nice to do it in public, with everybody listening to your voice. I am looking forward to next Sunday, when I shall do my solo. But think what it must be to sing before five thousand people, instead of three hundred. My mother used to tell me that at La Scala, in Milan, she had seen five thousand in the audience, on important opera nights. Mustn't it have been glorious?"

"I have heard that La Scala is a large building," said John Raymond, dryly.

## CHAPTER V

"Ah, Love! Could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry scheme of things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mould it nearer to the heart's desire?"

Quite naturally, chat over the one o'clock dinner-tables in Azalia on that Sunday had for its main topic the new soprano of St. Jude's. It was the more interesting, as the diners said, because she was one of themselves. Azalia was opulent of local pride. One of the common expressions was "We always take care of our own." So Adelina "got it going and coming." Not only was her singing duly criticised, but her personal appearance went through the mill of expert feminine comment, and came out ground exceeding small. Her costume, and particularly her hat, were the subject of detailed censure by "mother" and "the girls," as they handed around the baked potatoes and string-beans, and saw, with respectful solicitude, that "father's" plate was kept well supplied with roast beef—the staple Sunday dinner meat in Azalia.

Nowhere was Adelina more thoroughly vivi-

sected than in the living-room behind the undertaker shop of Solomon Potter, the sexton. Mr. Potter had been obliged to pump the organ that morning, and when he had at last been delivered from the dusty little cupboard, it was as a disheveled, dirty, muscle-sore rapscallion—hardly to be recognized as the dignified individual, in immaculate white shirt and collar and carefully-knotted sky-blue necktie, who had gone to his grimy doom an hour or so before. He was swallowing his meal in such a disgusted frame of mind that it *must* have interfered with his digestion.

"Those boys are never on hand when they're wanted," he growled, between mouthfuls, "and old Von Hagen keeps that organ going, playing those tarra-liddles of his when there's no singing, and using up the wind as if it pumped itself."

"It's too bad," responded Mrs. Potter, sympathetically. "I hope you won't have to do it to-night."

"I won't. That's flat. If there ain't no boy there won't be no music," declared Mr. Potter, his anger driving him to double negatives. "I reckon Addie Von Hagen can sing without the organ if she has to."

With that the sexton relapsed into silence and gave undivided attention to his dinner. Mr. and

Mrs. Potter were dining alone. They had no children, and Mrs. Potter's younger sister, who lived with them ordinarily, was away on a visit to Circleville.

"There ain't no one sayin' as Addie can't sing," remarked Mrs. Potter, after a pause, during which she had been ruminating over her husband's last words. "But ever since I heerd her mother belonged to a the-ayter troupe I've had my doubts about her. I never thought she'd be allowed to sing in our church choir."

"H'm!"

"Yes, I know, Solomon Potter. You think Addie Von Hagen is purty nigh perfection. But there's them as believes she'll go off like her mother some day, and you can't deny, as a Christian, that play-actin' is godless, any way you look at it."

"Well, when she does it will be time enough to talk about it," rejoined Solomon, pushing away his empty plate. "Any dessert?"

"Yes, there's some strawberries and cream. I put 'em out in the shop, so they'd keep cool, without me havin' to go down to the cellar."

The good lady went into the darkened shop, where two long boxes standing upright against the wall, and another one, cloth-covered and silver-handled, lying at full length upon a pair of black

trestles, loomed up ghastly in the shadows. Mrs. Potter had been an undertaker's wife too long to give way to superstitious shudders in the presence of a few "caskets," finished or otherwise. She went to a wide shelf in one corner, where lay a baby's coffin, in naked, "untrimmed" woodenness. Lifting the lid, she brought forth a glass dish of strawberries and a pitcher of cream.

"I had to put on the lid," she explained, "or the cat might have got into the cream. These are good strawberries, and I think you'll like 'em. Ah! The baby that'll go into that casket won't never be old enough to eat no strawberries. Well, well, it's the way of the world!"

She sighed piously, and giving her husband a liberal helping of the fruit, passed him the cream, and then filled her own dish, probably congratulating herself that she had not died too young to get her share of strawberries.

"I s'pose Addie'll sing a solo next Sunday?" she said, interrogatively, as she spooned up some cream ready to follow the strawberry she held in her fingers ready to pop into her mouth. "I was hopin' she'd do it this mornin'."

"She'll sing one next Sunday morning, I heard 'Squire Morgan say," Solomon returned. "And it's to be a hummer. The music committee allow they'll

know from that whether she is good enough to stay in the choir. I'm betting she will, for that girl can sing, and I don't care what her mother was," added Solomon, defiantly, as he got up from the table, to take his Sunday afternoon nap in his office chair in the shop, among the coffins.

While the good people of Azalia were talking about her over their Sunday dinners, what was Adelina doing?

Adelina?

Who was this, kneeling by the bed in the dainty bedroom where the crimson roses on the porch crept up to the window, her cheek pressed against an old opera score on the white counterpane, weeping in a tempest of passionate sobs?

Surely none other than the young girl whose voice had risen so joyously in the "Venite exultemus Domino," and who had walked home from the church with John Raymond, full of happiness that, in singing in the choir, she had attained at least one of her ambitions!

But why did she cry? Why was her bosom heaving as if a battle were raging there—a conflict none the less violent because the contending forces were confined to such a narrow space? Why did she clasp the dog's-eared old opera-book to her

heart, and murmur so pitifully: "Mother! Mother! What is right for me to do?"

What was right for her to do? Was not the explanation to be found in that wild cry for guidance? Could it not have been that this day, on which she had been able to set really free for the first time the song that was in her, had drawn her more strongly than ever toward the career for which she longed? If so, how natural for her to weep! Perhaps the excitement had something to do with it. So sensitive a temperament must find some relief, and what could there be more grateful than tears?

"Mother!" she cried again, always with that piteous note of doubt. "I think I love him. I'm almost sure I do. But I can't give up all for him. I cannot—I cannot. I've been fighting it for weeks and months, and now I know. I'll do what you would have wished."

Full of impulse, she suddenly sprang to her feet, and, kissing the old book, placed it reverently on the pile with the others. Then she looked into the mirror, and, with practiced fingers, straightened her tumbled hair. The canary, among the roses in the porch below, began to sing, as if he, too, had just resolved in his mind some doubt that had been troubling him.

"I hope my eyes are not red enough for my father to notice them," said Adelina to herself.

Then she smiled at her misgiving, for she knew he never looked at her closely enough for that. Besides, a little cold water would soon take out the inflammation. She had not wept long.

When she went down stairs, ten minutes afterward, there was nothing in her calm face to betray her, and when Harriet Wylie—Daddy Wylie's granddaughter, who always cooked and served dinner for them on Sunday—said she wished she could have been at church, to hear her sing, Adelina promised that she would sing everything for her after dinner that she had sung in church, so that she might have some idea of how it had sounded. And sing she did, with her own piano accompaniment, while her father smoked his china-bowled German pipe in the porch and half choked the canary with tobacco.

It seemed a very short time to Adelina before she was again in the choir gallery, with the smirking Adolph Schwartz on one side and Mlle. Marie Connor and Saul Hunter on the other, listening to her father playing a Guilmant sonata as an organ prelude, through which could be heard at intervals the wheezing of the air-pump in its little closet. Then the service began, and the musical

portion, which included a contralto solo by Mlle. Connor, was carried through with perfect smoothness.

Adelina was rather taken aback when, after the benediction, all the congregation, with the exception of a few bashful boys in their teens, insisted on shaking hands with her. Mrs. Treadhouse led in the ceremony. There had been no such general demonstration in the morning. Not that anyone in the congregation had failed to note how the new soprano had improved the quartette; but the situation was a delicate one, and it was felt that, unless Mrs. Treadhouse should place the seal of her approval on her successor, no one else could do it with decency.

It was no secret that Susan had been angry when the music committee—all three together, for no one man had the nerve to face her with such a message—had told her that her resignation was required. Indeed, for a day or two afterward, she had entertained a wild purpose to defy the committee and remain in the choir, even if it should mean the forcible establishing of a lop-sided quintette, with two warring sopranos at one end.

But the Reverend Thomas, docile fifty-one Sundays in the year, could take the bit in his teeth on the fifty-second, if his conscience told him that

duty demanded firmness. This chanced to be that fifty-second Sunday, and when Mrs. Thomas spoke, in the morning, before church, of showing the music committee that they could not ride rough-shod over her, he sternly informed her that, as pastor, he had given his assent to what they had done, and therefore there was nothing more to be said—except that he requested her to be courteous to Miss Von Hagen, and quoted one or two pertinent passages from Holy Writ on the evils of envy, malice and uncharitableness. The result was the formal handshaking—which fatigued Adelina, and found much less favor with her than the sentiment conveyed.

Heinrich Von Hagen was proud of his daughter's success. He did not tell her so, but he showed it by rehearsing with her at home, night after night, the solo she was to sing on the following Sunday. On Wednesday he gave her additional proof of his satisfaction by taking her into his confidence in, for him, an unusual way. He actually told her the contents of a letter he had got from the postoffice the day before—rather, as she suspected, because he wanted to talk to somebody, than with any idea of interesting her. And yet the news in the letter was of some personal concern to her, too.

"An old friend of your mother's, Luigi Golfanti,

is coming to Azalia on Saturday. He is going to stay over Sunday," said Heinrich, looking up at her from the piano when she had just finished her solo—Haydn's "With Verdure Clad," from "The Creation"—and was waiting for his criticism.

Adelina well remembered Signor Golfanti. When she was a little child he had come to their home occasionally, with his wife, to talk over old days. It was then that the girl had heard reminiscences of splendid triumphs on the stage, in which both her mother and Signor Golfanti had shared, that stirred her soul to its very depths. Yes, she never could forget Signor Golfanti.

"What's he coming for, father?"

Heinrich Von Hagen chuckled.

"You'll hardly believe it, but he says he heard, in Cincinnati, where he is now, singing in the big musical festival, that you are leading soprano at an Azalia church—he doesn't know we have a quartette choir—and he wants to hear you sing. So, on his way back to New York, he will stop off here and hear your solo on Sunday. Mind you do your best. Haydn is tricky in spots, but you can sing him if you try hard."

"But why is Signor Golfanti so interested in me as to take all this trouble to hear me sing?" she asked, wonderingly.

"Well, I'll tell you," answered her father, with a shrug of the shoulders. "Luigi was in love with your mother before we were married, but I won her away from him."

"Yes, I've heard that."

"It seems he made a promise to your mother once that, when you were old enough to sing, he would do all he could to help you if you wanted to make a profession of music. It was a stupid thing for him to do, but these Italians are liable to do anything. That's all there is to it. Now, I want to show him that my daughter, under my instruction, has learned to sing—like her. You understand? Luigi and some of the other jealous people said I didn't treat your mother well. That was all a lie, of course. But he may believe it. Now, if he sees you full of life and spirit, and singing with the animation your mother always showed in opera, particularly in such *rôles* as Carmen and Zerlina, he will know better. He will see that I have taken good care of your health, besides teaching you to use your voice. There's something more, too. If I am good to my daughter, I must have been kind to her mother."

This rather lame deduction seemed to please him, for he muttered, with conviction: "Why,

sure! I have took care of my daughter. Then, how could I be anything except a good husband?"

"Where will Signor Golfanti live while he is in Azalia?" asked Adelina.

"We shall have to make room for him. There is the attic. It is big and it has four windows. The air blows right through when they are open. Golfanti ought to sleep well up there. It's a lovely room."

"I hope it won't be too hot. It's immediately under the roof, you know, and shingles draw the sun terribly," she objected, with the anxiety of a prospective hostess.

Von Hagen waved all this away with a backward sweep of the hand.

"It will be all right. Don't you worry about that. You put clean sheets on the bed and have a mirror for him to brush his hair by, and that will do. You hear me? That is enough. Eh?"

"Very well, father. I'll get Harriet to come and help me fix it. But what shall we do with all the lumber in the attic?"

"Lumber? What lumber?"

"All those iron music-stands."

"Oh, yes. I remember. I used them for my summer concerts in Louisville that time."

"Then there is the double-bass viol, and piles

and piles of orchestra scores. Can I put them in the wood-shed?"

Heinrich Von Hagen jumped up and shook his fists at the ceiling in indignant horror.

"Ach himmel!" he roared. "The wood-shed! No. Put them up against the walls—music-stands, everything—in the attic, where they are. There'll be plenty of room for Golfanti. He won't mind the bass viol. He oughtn't to. It has helped him many a time in the theatre, hiding his sour notes."

Adelina was a little surprised by this sneer at their expected guest's voice, but she made no remark. Luigi Golfanti had been her father's rival for the hand of her mother, and that must have meant some bitter feeling between them. Perhaps it had not all died out even now, after twenty years. Adelina was sure that, if she loved anyone very much, she never could forgive the woman who tried to take him from her.

Why did not Adelina, in these musings, name John Raymond? Why did she content herself with "if I loved *anyone* very much?" She could have given only one explanation—that the words formed themselves in her mind in their own way. Poor John Raymond!

Harriet and Adelina swept through the attic cyclonically. They moved everything in the large

room, which extended the whole depth of the house from back to front, and had two windows at each end. Harriet—a buxom maiden of seventeen, who never in her life had known what it was to be really tired—poked a broom into every corner, and completed the treatment with soap and a scrubbing-brush. The musical paraphernalia was pushed against the dwarf wall where the roof sloped to the top of it, and when strips of carpet were laid and Adelina had put the finishing touches, one would hardly have known the orderly, inviting apartment for the dingy, muddled attic it had been before they began work. It not only looked, but smelled, different. The mustiness had been swept and scrubbed out of it, and instead there was the sweet piney odor of the damp floor, mingled with that of the roses Adelina had gathered. She would keep some in the room, changing them every day, until the visitor came.

It was noon on Saturday when the local train on the branch road that passed through Azalia brought Luigi Golfanti. Heinrich Von Hagen and Adelina were at the "depot," in company with the usual coterie of station loafers, to whom the coming in of a train was the thrilling excitement of their lives.

The crazy wooden platform was level with

the tracks. Near one end, where the loafers sat on a bench in the shade, chewing tobacco and whittling soft pine, were the ticket and telegraph office, the waiting parlor and the baggage room, all under one roof—which leaked villainously when it rained or snowed.

"Here she comes!" announced one of the weary tobacco-chewing gentlemen on the bench, and everyone became galvanized into some sort of movement and expectancy. "She" was the train.

It was not a train to make much fuss over, judged by city standards, although it passed muster in Azalia. It consisted of a locomotive long banished from the main line as old-fashioned and nearly worn out, a combination baggage-car and passenger coach, and an empty freight car to balance the outfit. As it came wheezing up, the engine-bell ringing maddeningly, Adelina saw, at an open window, the face of a man whom one would have known for an Italian anywhere, framed in by long curly gray hair. The eyes were very dark and penetrating, and there was a good-humored smile rippling over the mobile mouth. A soft felt hat was set back on his head as if he wanted to see everything, and certainly was resolved not to be annoyed by such a thing as a hat-brim.

"Hello, Luigi!" called out Von Hagen.

The next moment Luigi Golfanti was on the station platform, holding Von Hagen by the two elbows with a light touch of finger-tips, as he greeted him with the smiling effusiveness which would have betrayed his nativity even without any other evidence.

"Ah! My Von! How you do?" he cried. "It is long since I see you. Ah! It is so long!" Then, turning to Adelina, he took her by the shoulders, and, to the amazement of the station loafers, gazing open-mouthed, he kissed her on the cheek, and said, exuberantly: "This is the little Adelina. I know it. I see her mother in her face. Santa Maria! How like she is! How like!"

Adelina saw that a young fellow of about nineteen, with dark eyes and hair, and heavy arched eyebrows that met—such a young man as Luigi Golfanti must have been at his age—was standing in the background with an embarrassed air, holding a suit-case. She also noticed that his eyes never left her face.

## CHAPTER VI

**"And has not such a story from of old**
**Down man's successive generations roll'd?"**

"Ah! You will pardon me? I forgot. My son, Pietro!" suddenly exclaimed Luigi Golfanti, leading the dark-eyed young man forward. "Adelina, you must be friends with him, eh? His mother's name was yours—Adelina. He is a good boy, but he not like to teach. What he always want is write music. It is a good ambition, but it not bring in much money."

A flush leaped over the cheeks of the youth as Adelina gave him her hand, and he said, in his deep tones, that he hoped to hear her sing in her home, as well as at church.

"Do you hear that, Von?" chirped Luigi. "That's my bashful son, trying to make an arrangement for Adelina to give him a private song recital. The first time he speak to her, too."

"I didn't mean that. You will be there, too, won't you?" said Pietro, naively.

Luigi burst into a peal of laughter that almost

drowned the clanking of the engine-bell and the conductor shouting "All aboard!" as the train pulled out.

"He want to know whether I'll be there, when he knows I've broken my journey to New York on purpose. Yes, Pietro, I will be there. Which is the way to the hotel, Von?"

"Ach! You will stay with us," replied Von Hagen. "We have a bedroom ready for you. If I'd known you had your son with you, we would have put in two beds."

Luigi Golfanti said nothing more about going to the hotel. No doubt he had expected Von Hagen's tender of a bedroom.

"What matter about the beds? There will be room in mine for Pietro. You not know he come with me, eh? Well, I not tell you because I forget. He only a boy, and I not think him worth while to keep in my mind."

"A boy?"

"Si. He just so old as Adelina. She like him when he small. He like her. Now they are strangers. But they soon get over that. Ha, ha, ha!"

Luigi Golfanti had an infectious laugh, and Adelina joined in, while Pietro smiled. Von Hagen made no response. With a grunt which might have

been sympathetic or not, just as you chose to interpret it, he marched down the platform in the direction of home.

While the station loungers still stared, as if petrified by so extraordinary a sight as these two Italian strangers, Luigi insisted on drawing one of the girl's arms through his own, and told Pietro to take the other. Pietro hesitated, and then obeyed, as Adelina smiled. In this order they paraded along Main street—Von Hagen in front, and the others, three abreast, close on his heels. It was an absurd performance. Adelina felt it, but there was no way of escape. Besides, Luigi appeared to enjoy it so much that it would have been cruel to object. As for Pietro, he looked straight ahead, pinning her hand tightly to his side with his elbow, and occasionally pulling her fingers a little forward under his arm when they seemed to be slipping away. He wished he were not bothered with the suit-case.

"Your father is the drum-major, Adelina. We the fifes and drums, eh?" laughed Luigi, as he began to play an imaginary snare-drum, but without releasing Adelina's arm. "T-r-rum! T-r-rum! T-r-rum—t-r-rum—t-r-rum!"

Who could resist this child-like gaiety, wherein the volatile Latin blood asserted itself, regardless of place or fitness? Not Adelina. At the beginning

she felt a little ashamed, as she saw Mrs. Solomon Potter, in the window of the undertaker shop, among her husband's coffins, holding up her hands in ostentatious astonishment; as Daddy Wylie, in the grocery and postoffice, called Dave Rundell to the door to look; as a farmer, driving along, with his wife, in a wagon whose blue paint was almost entirely hidden by dust, pulled up short, and, grinning derisively, pointed at Luigi with his whip; as half a dozen other wide-eyed men and women came running to the doors of their houses and stores; as curious little girls and boys, their hands behind them, regarded them with solemn eyes as they passed, and, finally, when she saw that a straggling group of older boys had joined the procession, and were tagging along in the rear, drumming with hands and voice, like Luigi.

She thrust aside her embarrassment by main strength. Why should she be disconcerted because the neighbors, who had known her from childhood, saw her in such an unusual public exhibition? They would understand, of course. These strangers, to whom the sober dignity of Azalia was something new, and doubtless admirable, could not be expected to absorb its splendid atmosphere, blue with decorum, all at once. Besides, they were "furriners," and, as all the wiseacres of this con-

servative town were well aware, the customs of other countries were not those of the United States. Adelina had a cynical comprehension of the local point of view. So she not only laughed, but merrily demanded of Pietro why he didn't play the fife. The youth, unspeakably ashamed of his father's behavior, had been blushing furiously under the gaze of the people they passed. He smiled gratefully at her. She returned the smile, shaking her head coquettishly at him, as Luigi continued to drum louder than ever.

And just then John Raymond turned the corner and confronted them.

As they came noisily along, taking up the whole width of the sidewalk, he stepped aside, involuntarily, while Heinrich Von Hagen, who hardly knew what was going on behind him, nodded carelessly to the young doctor and turned the corner into his own street. Adelina, the smile gone from her face, but with both arms still held so tightly that she could not release them, stopped short, compelling her two companions to do the same. The rear-guard of boys, many of them barefooted, not expecting the sudden halt, stumbled against them tumultuously.

There was no mistaking the significance of John Raymond's frown. Surprise, disgust, anger

and pain, as of one who sees a beautiful fragile vase suddenly dashed down and ground to nothingness under a heavy heel—all these were in his face. His eyes blazed in their brown depths, and, as his lips tightened, the blood left them, and his mouth became a thin, livid line. He glanced once at Luigi,—who had stopped drumming,—as at an imbecile, not worthy of more than passing attention, and, then, after a short, angry look at Pietro —who promptly scowled in return—he gazed steadily into Adelina's face.

Only feminine tact could save such a situation. Drawing her arms from their bondage with an effort, she indicated Luigi with her right hand, and said, cheerfully:

"Mr. Raymond, permit me to introduce Signor Golfanti, of New York," adding, after a pause, with a swift look at Raymond which he understood, and in a different tone, "one of my dear mother's most valued friends before I was born."

A little sigh heaved her bosom as she mentioned her mother, and some of Raymond's fury evaporated at the explanation, for he knew that if this gray-haired Italian had been a friend of Adelina's mother, he had a claim on the girl's regard which would excuse even his making her ridiculous on Azalia's most important street. So he inclined

his head graciously, although he could not bring himself to smile. Luigi Golfanti smiled, however. Removing his soft hat with a flourish, he placed his left hand over his heart and bowed low, saying:

"Signor, I have the honor to salute you, and I thank the charming Adelina for presenting me. It is a pleasure will remain always in my memory."

What could John Raymond say or do after that? When Luigi pointed to Pietro, with "My son, Pietro, Signor Raymond," he bowed to the dark-faced young man, who, with unrelaxed brow, bent his head in acknowledgment, but did not speak. Then Raymond asked Luigi whether it was their first visit to Azalia.

"Si," was the reply. "It is to my everlasting regret that I have not been in this beautiful place before. But it was not to be. It is more than six hundred miles from New York. Now, when my boy and I go to Cincinnati, to the festival, where Pietro and I play and sing for enough to pay the expense, I say to Pietro 'We must visit Azalia. I not see Adelina Von Hagen since she little girl.' Well, I write to her father, and he tell me she in the choir and she sing a solo on Sunday. What then? I write him we come, and here we are. So."

The noisy boys who had been following the impromptu procession had gone away, when they saw

the fun was over, and Adelina led the way into the street on which she and the Raymonds lived. John walked by her side, displacing Pietro, who did not like it, but could not help himself. He saw that this tall fellow had taken possession of the girl as if it were his right, and Pietro hated him. His hatred was the more bitter because Raymond practically ignored him, addressing all his remarks to Luigi. Pietro was accustomed to his father treating him as a boy, and thought nothing of it. But this stranger was different. His cool, almost contemptuous, demeanor toward one who was as much a man as himself, even if a few years younger, was not to be borne quietly. He would demand an explanation of this Mr. Raymond, or the satisfaction of a gentleman. Pietro was not clear as to what form this satisfaction would take in a country where a duel would lead him, possibly with a rough policeman's grasp on his coat-collar, to a prosaic prison cell. But he would find some way of revenging himself. Yes, he would find some way. He slammed the suit-case against a tree in impotent rage.

Not only did Raymond leave him out of the conversation—deliberately and with malice, of course—but he had had the insolence to push Pietro aside, almost, so that he (Raymond) could stroll

along with Adelina. Pietro, as he walked behind, saw him slyly take her hand once, and she let her hand stay in his while Pietro counted three before drawing it gently away. Pietro saw this. It was not as if somebody else had told him. In that case, it might not have been true. But he had the evidence of his own eyes, and a very miserable young man it made him.

"You knew Adelina when she was a child, before she came to Azalia, then?" inquired Raymond, as they walked along by the laurel-hung picket-fences under the whispering elms.

"Si. Her mother was my cousin. So Adelina is our cousin, too—mine and Pietro's."

Pietro shot a swift glance of exultation at Raymond. At least, this self-sufficient personage was not her relative. Pietro had the advantage of him there.

"Aren't we taking you out of your way, John?" Adelina asked him. "You were going down Main street, and now you are coming back. I hope we are not keeping you from some patient who needs you."

"Oh, no. I was only going to Root's drug store for some calomel pills and quinine. I always carry them with me when I make my round of

calls, and I find myself nearly out. But I can get them later."

So this Raymond was a doctor. Pietro never had known a doctor who didn't think himself wiser and better than other people. But Pietro was sure of one thing—if he were sick, he would rather die than trust himself in the hands of Doctor Raymond. And—why did she call him "John" so familiarly?

The four of them went slowly along, Pietro viciously kicking the cinders from the path with his heel from time to time, and Luigi enjoying the soft beauty of the scene with the delight an artist always finds in the country. Pietro had the capacity of artistic appreciation as well as his father, but his heart was too full of unavailing bitterness just now to look at anything except the broad back of John Raymond, perfect summer day as it was.

"Your father is home already, Adelina," remarked Raymond, as Von Hagen stopped at the gate and looked toward them, surprised to find that they had lagged so far behind.

"You'll come in, John, won't you?" Adelina asked, as they quickened their pace. "I want to give you a pansy to wear in your coat."

"Over your heart," put in Luigi, as he placed

his right forefinger along the side of his nose knowingly, and smiled.

"Do you think I need it?" asked Raymond, softly, of Adelina.

"Don't you think we all need it more or less?"

Raymond nodded, and again Pietro saw him take her hand, and again she did not withdraw it immediately.

"I'll come as far as the garden for the heart's-ease—pansy, I mean," Raymond said, and did not say anything more until they had reached the gate, when, Von Hagen having already entered, he stood aside to let Luigi and Pietro go in, following them up the garden-path with Adelina.

Von Hagen ushered his guests into the shady front room where stood Adelina's piano. Her sheet-music lay there open, just as she had left it after rehearsing her solo for Sunday, and her father's violin, in its case, was on a chair close by. Pietro took in all the details of the apartment as soon as he was inside the door, and his fingers itched to try the piano.

"I'll show you your room, Luigi," volunteered Von Hagen. "Perhaps you and your son would like to wash up, after your journey?"

"Si. That a good idea. But you will not come up. It is not necessary to give you the fa-

tigue. Tell us where it is, and Pietro and I we find it."

Heinrich Von Hagen was not fond of climbing stairs, and he was grateful to Luigi.

"It's at the top of the house. There's only one room, so you can't miss it," he said.

"Buono! We get there. Come, Pietro!"

Pietro did not respond. He was looking out of the window, through the rose-vines, where the crimson ramblers swayed in the gentle summer breeze, at two figures in the garden. One of them, in a light frock, was stooping over a pansy-bed, while the other, whom Pietro hated, held her hand, pretending she needed his assistance to save her from falling forward among the flowers.

"Pietro!"

Luigi called him a second time, sharply, and he came to himself with a jerk.

"What is it, father?"

"Come up stairs, and bring the suit-case with you."

"Yes, father."

He took up the suit-case from the floor, and, after glowering once more through the window toward the pansy-bed, went out of the room and up the stairs after his parent.

"It make you puff, eh, Pietro?" laughed Luigi,

as they entered the great attic on the third story. "I hear you."

"Yes, father."

But the sound Luigi had heard which he supposed to be a catching of the breath, caused by carrying the heavy suit-case up so many stairs, was really a sigh. If he had known what was passing in his son's mind as the young man went over to one of the front windows and peered down into the garden, he would have called Pietro a fool.

## CHAPTER VII

"The melting voice through mazes running
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony."

Pietro Golfanti was up early the next morning. It was not that the distracting thoughts which had made him sigh so heavily at the top of the stairs had disturbed his rest. His digestion was too good to permit him to be rendered sleepless by the first assault from a pretty girl's eyes. Neither could such embryotic jealousy as had made him learn to hate John Raymond in the few minutes it had taken to walk from the corner of Main street to her father's garden gate stretch him helpless on the hot griddle of insomnia. He was up soon after daybreak simply because he had retired early the night before, and his healthy young constitution demanded only a reasonable amount of honest sleep. Once awake, the matin song of the birds and the dewy fragrance of the awakening flowers invited his soul, and, after a rapid, but quiet, toilet, so that he would not disturb his father, who enjoyed a morning slumber, he stole softly down the

staircase and let himself out, without encountering anyone.

He walked down the garden and along the cinder-path, in the opposite direction from Main street, past four more houses like Von Hagen's and Raymond's, and then struck into a lane, between snake-fences and hedgerows alternately, until he found himself in the real country. Habitations had ceased altogether, and after crossing the creek bridge under the sycamores, he plunged into a thicket, where hundreds of birds were holding noisy revel in the tree-tops. Throwing himself upon a knoll of soft moss under an ancient oak, he listened. He could hear the splashing and rippling of the creek accompanying the bird-voices, and once he caught the tinkle of a cow-bell so far away that it was sweetened into music. Subconsciously, he began to gather the woodland sounds into musical phrases and chords, until he had evolved an orderly harmonic theme. The composer was not to be denied. He took a folded page of music-paper from his pocket and hastily scribbled some notes until he had enough written down to keep the melody in his mind. Pietro loved composition, and it was his habit always to carry paper of this kind, ruled with the five lines of the music staff, ready for his fountain-pen at any time or place.

"There is the foundation of something, at all events," he said to himself, at last, as he got up, and, sauntering over the bridge, the way he had come, turned over and over in his mind the musical thought he had just jotted down.

It was so calm and still that he could hardly believe it was the ordinary every-day condition even of this country place, far away from the city's bustle and discord. Born and bred in town, he had never experienced anything quite like this, and he could not help feeling that there must be some noise before long. It might not be so unpleasant as that with which he was familiar in some parts of New York, but surely there would be some. All at once, he understood—or thought he did. It was Sunday morning. He had forgotten it until now. Doubtless that was the reason of this glorious quietude. On other mornings, of course, there would be the din and jar of man's occupations. Perhaps there was a factory or two not far off. If not that, at least, there must be other smaller industries, dozens of them, that on week days would break rudely on the ear even at this early hour. Then farm-hands made harsh noises—bellowing at their horses as they drove strange machines of whirling spikes and clanking cogs across the fields.

All these would be heard on other days. But not on Sunday.

"I am glad it is Sunday," said Pietro, aloud, when he had argued it all out, and he walked on, congratulating himself, until he reached the garden gate of the house where he and his father were guests.

"Good morning, Pietro!"

He started and flushed with pleasure, for it was the voice of Adelina Von Hagen, and she had called him by his given name. She was coming down the garden-path, among the rose-bushes, radiant and fresh as the morning itself. She wore her usual white summer frock, and her loosely-tressed hair, burnished by the golden sunshine, crowned her with "angelic glory," as Pietro put it to himself.

"Good morning, Miss Von Hagen," he said. (It was a commonplace way in which to address an angel, but he could not think of anything else to say at the moment.) "I have been for a walk. It is very beautiful here. I found a place in the wood on the other side of that river which—"

She interrupted him with a merry laugh, holding up her hands deprecatingly.

"Not so bad as that, Pietro. We are not so benighted in Azalia as to believe our poor little creek is a river."

"I'm sorry I made a mistake, Miss Von Hagen. I was only going to say that the wood was like a fairy dell."

"You are a poet, Pietro."

"I am a musician, Miss Von Hagen."

"I understand. The words are synonymous, of course. But you must not say 'Miss Von Hagen' when you speak to me. We are cousins, you know, and it must be 'Adelina.' I call you 'Pietro.' Cousins are almost like brothers and sisters, I always think."

"But there is a difference," said Pietro, gravely, shaking his head. "Although I never had a sister, I'm sure you would never be like one to me—Adelina."

There! He had said it—to her, and although he had repeated the name to himself many times since he had first met her as a grown-up young lady the afternoon before, it was with hesitation he had uttered it now, almost as if it were a word difficult to pronounce. And certainly, in itself, it was not. It was as mellifluous a marshaling of syllables as ever made up a girl's name. It rolled off the tongue of that Doctor Raymond smoothly enough—confound him!

"That's right, Pietro," she said, approvingly.

"Always call me 'Adelina,' because we are going to be good friends, as well as cousins, I am sure."

She was endeavoring to put him at his ease, and he rather rebelled inwardly against her assistance. He was a man—a man of the world—and he should not be bashful before a girl, no matter how fascinating she might be. But he was not at his ease, somehow, and, unhappily for his pride, it was quite apparent to her. It made him angry, but only with himself.

"I suppose there is some distinction between sisters and cousins," she continued, more thoughtfully, but still with a smile dimpling her cheeks, as they walked up the garden toward the porch. "Did you ever hear that old song about cousins, Pietro? One of the verses runs like this:

"Had you ever a cousin, Tom?
Did your cousin happen to sing?
Sisters we have by the dozen, Tom;
But a cousin's a different thing."

She sang the lines to an old-fashioned air, while Pietro listened with a rapt admiration such as he might have bestowed on a Miltonic poem in a Beethoven setting.

"I never heard that verse, but it is full of truth," was his sober comment. "I am glad we are cousins—distant cousins."

She only laughed at this. Too unaffected to pretend she did not know what the speech meant, it would have been tiresome to pursue the subject further. So she told him her father was down stairs—she could see him prowling about the hall—and therefore they'd better go in for breakfast.

Harriet Wylie would not be there, to take charge of the household, until nine o'clock. Therefore, it was Adelina who prepared breakfast in the summer kitchen and served it in the adjoining dining-room, and all without bustle or excitement.

Luigi Golfanti came down just as she brought the freshly-laid eggs to the table, having boiled them to the exact point where they were perfect, as he solemnly declared a little later. Before seating himself he bowed to her, and then to her father, with a grace which Adelina thought thoroughly Italian and charming, as she took her place behind the coffee-urn.

"Sit here, won't you, Signor Golfanti," she said, indicating a chair on her right, down the side of the table. Her father was on her left, and Pietro faced her, so that the little party just filled the four sides of the square table.

"This is the happiness, to be so near the beautiful prima donna," said Luigi, as he took his cup

of coffee from her, making a playful pretence of kissing her fingers during the process.

"Take care, Signor. You will spill the hot coffee up your sleeve," she warned him.

"What I care for that, if my lips touch your hand?" was his gallant response.

He was so full of spirits, so loud and jovial, so easy in his badinage with the girl, that Pietro envied him the added years which had brought with them such useful self-possession.

"Beautiful eggs!" observed Luigi, having already complimented Adelina on the cooking of them. "I suppose you get them from your own chickens, eh?"

"Yes. We have a great many well-behaved hens, who serve us with all the eggs we require for the table. They are dominated by a black Spanish rooster, and he sees that they do their duty. After breakfast I will show you that rooster."

"Thanks."

"You, too, Pietro," she added, quickly, as she saw dawning disappointment in his face, and knew that he was at the point of feeling slighted.

He brightened up immediately, and as Von Hagen, who had been silently devouring his food and absorbing his coffee, without taking much notice of anything else, now began to talk about

the stupidity of the people of Azalia, none of whom could learn to play the violin, Pietro listened with attention, making observations on music from time to time which gave Von Hagen a high opinion of the young man's discernment.

The two visitors had made great way into the favor of both father and daughter since they had met at the railroad station. The night before, after supper, there had been music, and Pietro had had the felicity of playing accompaniments for several of Adelina's songs.

John Raymond had been there, and Pietro rejoiced that this doctor could not play the piano. More than once, as he played, with Adelina standing so close to him that her lace sleeve touched his hair, Pietro looked over to Raymond to see how he bore it. But the doctor seemed not to take any particular notice. He appeared to be enjoying the music, as he lay back comfortably in a low rocker—Adelina's own chair—and, if he was jealous, it did not appear on the surface.

"He believes he's sure of her, I suppose."

Pietro ground his teeth and struck such a mighty chord—so much louder than the "*p.*" on his music called for—that Adelina looked down at him in astonishment, and Raymond stopped rocking for an instant.

But the evening had ended without any outbreak—early, as was the custom in the Von Hagen household—and Raymond had departed with a simple "Good night" to her in the well-lighted music-room, with the others all present. There had been no private farewell outside, in the semi-darkness of the porch, as Pietro had feared there might be. And yet, if the doctor and Adelina *had* chosen to go to the porch to say "Good night," what business would it have been of Pietro Golfanti's?

This was the question Pietro asked himself, in monotonous repetition, this morning, always without finding an answer, as, after breakfast, Adelina took them to the back yard and showed him and his father the lordly black Spanish rooster, stepping high among the cackling hens who darted hither and thither to gobble down the dainty morsels he scratched up for them. When they returned to the house to get ready for church it was still in his mind.

Afterward it became painfully insistent as he caught glimpses of the flowers in her hat above the red curtains of the choir-gallery, while her father played the organ prelude and the Reverend Thomas Treadhouse took his place on the pulpit platform.

Pietro was glad he and his father were seated

in front of John Raymond, so that it was not necessary to look at the doctor at all during the service. Adelina had walked to church with Pietro, her father and Luigi, and Pietro had seen Raymond enter later, going to a pew without the opportunity of exchanging a word or look with her. There was some satisfaction in that.

The service began, and Pietro would have liked to wring the neck of Adolph Schwartz for standing so close to her while they sang the "Exultemus." Luigi did not notice Adolph's misdemeanor. He was taken up with the music, and, while thinking how good a choir it was for a country church, gave much of the credit for its excellence to the soprano, whose pure quality had already filled his musician's soul with delight when Adelina sang bits from the operas he knew so well on the evening before.

Pietro appreciated the voice, too, but it is to be feared that, for the time being, he was more interested in the singer than her work. He calmed down, however, when he thought he saw that she deliberately snubbed the blond tenor by turning her back on him. Then Pietro was able to concentrate his attention on the music.

Adelina's part in the quartette gave earnest of what she would do in the solo, and it was only

Luigi and Pietro who were filled with eager anticipation when at last she stood up alone to sing the selection from Haydn's "Creation" which she had chosen for her first single number in St. Jude's choir. The church was full, and everyone was anxious to hear how the new soprano would acquit herself.

This solo would be Adelina's supreme test, and although her father and John Raymond both were certain that she would come through it in triumph, and Susan Treadhouse, while devoutly hoping she would fail, had not the slightest expectation of anything of the kind, Adelina could not repress altogether a tremor of nervousness as she faced the congregation by herself, while her father ran over the prelude on the organ. But the nervousness vanished as she began to sing. The beautiful words of "With Verdure Clad," with the majestic music to which they were wedded, made her forget all else. Her technique was so nearly perfect that only the highly-trained and sensitive ear of Luigi Golfanti might detect any shortcoming, and even he was not sure. Her father, who had his own cares with the organ—for there was a novice at the pump, and he was fearful that his supply of wind might run out at any moment—noted that her time was correct, and therefore was satisfied with her sing-

ing. John Raymond enjoyed it, but with the indefinable pang at his heart that always was there when she sang in public.

Susan Treadhouse mentally admitted that she could not have done it any better herself. Mrs. Solomon Potter, Miss Crupp, Mrs. Wilkins and other members of the Sewing Circle liked the music so much that they were inclined to believe it was wicked to let it be sung in church. As Mrs. Potter said afterward, she felt almost as if she were "at the Eyetalian opera, listenin' to one o' them actresses in short skirts an' flesh-colored tights I've heerd tell about." Mrs. Potter's impressions of the lyric stage were confined to what she had been told by people whose information, like her own, was derived from hearsay, and she never could divest herself of the conviction that every prominent cantatrice was habitually costumed like a ballet-dancer. The Rev. Mr. Treadhouse, who had a sincere love of music, although he never could sing a note, sat through the solo in a reverie of delight, one knee crossed over the other, and his two hands, joined by the tips of the fingers, gently oscillating in front of him.

The first movement of the melody was soft and low, but low as it was, not much more than a whisper, the girl's rich tones penetrated to every

corner of the church. As she went on there were brilliant passages of greater volume, with several that called forth all the power of execution that a cultivated voice should possess. Adelina was equal to them all, and when at last she stood silent, while the organ finished the accompaniment, there were many there, notably Luigi Golfanti, who would have liked to give vent to their feelings in vigorous applause. Indeed, Luigi actually had raised his hands, as if about to clap them together, and perhaps would have done so, had not Pietro, aware of his father's propensity to forget everything else when in a state of musical ecstasy, pulled his sleeve, to remind him that he was in a church, and not an opera house.

Adelina could not escape the numerous congratulations awaiting her at the end of the service, but she got away as soon as she could, and, with a general smile to the enthusiastic congregation massed on the steps, and after a grasp of the hand demanded by Daddy Wylie—who was doddering about on the sidewalk, determined to tell her that she was a "gosh-blamed good singer, by heck!"—she took her father's arm and whispered to him to hurry. She wanted to get to her own room before John Raymond would have a chance to

speak to her. She felt that she could not stand him just now.

How it would have rejoiced Pietro could he have known why she ran away, leaving him hemmed in by a group of ladies, to whom Mrs. Potter was introducing him and his father with much unction, as "Signor" (with a hard "g") Golfanti and Mr. Pietro Golfanti, of New York." Mrs. Potter had previously caught John Raymond and demanded an introduction to them for herself, so that she could assume the office of sponsor for the distinguished strangers to the other ladies. Pietro saw Adelina go away with her father, and, while he was disappointed that he had not been able to walk with her, he had the consolation of noting that Doctor Raymond also was shipwrecked with himself and his father in this roaring sea of feminine curiosity and inconsequential jabber.

Adelina did not cry on her bed this Sunday, as she had done a week before. There were two reasons why she did not. She was happy in her success, and she had made up her mind. The bitter mental struggle when she had wept over her mother's opera score had cleared the air for her, and she knew now that she had reached an irrevocable decision for the future. Sooner or later she must burst the bonds that held her in this nar-

row life. Her wings were spread already to carry her into the boundless ether of art, and she must make the flight, no matter where it might end. It was to be alone with her ambition for a few minutes that she had hastened home with her father. As she went up the stairs she heard him grumbling at Harriet because the dinner would be fifteen minutes late.

## CHAPTER VIII.

"And Death in time doth change
It to a clod of clay."

Adelina settled down into her place in the quartette as if she found in it all the scope for her musical development that she could desire. No doubt she would be entirely satisfied now. That was John Raymond's hope. She never had said anything about her determination to sing in opera since the Sunday on which she first became part of St. Jude's choir. What was in her mind in that connection no one knew but herself. She filled her duties, household as well as musical, to the satisfaction of her father and the music committee, and if a vision of a great opera house, filled with applauding people, was often before her, she kept the picture hidden away as one of the secret treasures of her mind. When she stood up, Sunday after Sunday, to sing some song of praise or supplication to the music on one of the immortals of the past, she may have compared the ugly little

choir-gallery, with its tawdry furnishings, to the magnificent theatre of her dreams in which she was resolved to sing some day. In fact, she did. An ambitious girl's thoughts will run away with her sometimes, you know.

No one in St. Jude's congregation caught any suggestion of these dreams in her looks, however. Her demeanor in the choir was that of one thoroughly contented. Adolph Schwartz irritated her a little. But she interposed a barrier of incredulous amusement when he tried to be sentimental, and he never could break through or climb over. The other two members of the quartette attended strictly to their own affairs. Mlle. Marie Connor sang her contralto music with the care and precision that had made her a successful milliner. Those qualities are as valuable in a choir-gallery as in a shop. Saul Hunter contributed his resonant bass regularly, but harvest time was approaching, and there were hard days ahead in the wheat fields. Saul wished the church would close for two months, at least. But there would be no such extended vacation as that for St. Jude's choir. It was customary to suspend service for two Sundays in August, to give the pastor a rest; that was all. The people of Azalia did not leave home in the summer, and there was not the excuse, made for

city churches, that there would be no attendance in the heated term, anyhow, and therefore the pastor might as well go to the seashore, or to Europe —or to Jericho, if he pleased.

So Adelina sang in the choir, while the summer passed. Saul Hunter helped to get in the wheat in due course; Mlle. Marie Connor was studying the New York magazines for the Paris fall hat fashions, and Adolph Schwartz said he had never before done such a rushing trade at the drug store in ice-cream sodas, sundaes and "Knocksie." Summer was almost ready to gasp its last. August had arrived, and soon it would be September, and then October.

Heinrich Von Hagen had had a letter from Luigi Golfanti, saying that he had sent him a certain Joachim "Scherzo" for the violin about which Von Hagen had spoken enthusiastically and covetously when Luigi and his son were in Azalia. Accompanying the "Scherzo" was a manuscript composition by Pietro, full of lilting melody, and with queer little turns and unexpected chromatics suggesting the sounds of the woods on a summer morning. Even before her father told her the Pietro music was for her, she knew it, and when she saw it was entitled "Azalia—A Fragment," she needed not to to informed where the composer had found

his inspiration. There were no words, but the melody was there in a single line, as if for the voice, with the rippling accompaniment, in full harmony for the piano, underneath.

"I *must* go and try it," she cried, delightedly, as soon as the sheet of paper was in her hand.

Going to the piano, she sang a "La-la-la-la" for the voice part, playing the accompaniment with an easy, flowing, sure touch, due primarily to those endless Czerny exercises she had begun as a child.

"Isn't it beautiful?" she called out to her father, over her shoulder. "Pietro should be a great composer some day. Don't you think so?"

"It's musicianly," admitted her father, as he took out his violin to try the "Scherzo." "Of course, it's founded on a Mendelssohn movement—there's no mistaking that—but it has as much originality as you ever find in a piece written nowadays."

This was as high praise as Heinrich Von Hagen ever would vouchsafe to a modern composition—more than he gave usually. Adelina did not care whether Mendelssohn had suggested it to Pietro or not. It breathed the odor of the woods and flowers, and echoed the songs of the wild birds, and probably Mendelssohn knew nothing about them now. How vividly the music brought to

her the dewy morning in June when Pietro came back from his early stroll and talked to her in the garden about cousins!

"Pietro is a very interesting boy," she said to herself. "I hope he'll marry some nice girl—when he's old enough."

Pietro was only a few weeks younger than herself, but a youth of nineteen is a mere child to many girls of the same age.

She sang over her "Fragment" twice, and then was required to furnish the piano accompaniment for the Joachim piece, while her father hugged his violin lovingly under his chin and swept the bow across the strings with a freedom and grace which proclaimed him master of his instrument. Playing his violin was Heinrich Von Hagen's compensation for what he called his "pile-driving" at the organ.

John Raymond heard the "Scherzo" as he walked swiftly down his garden on his way to call on his patients. He remarked that it was "pretty," and then dismissed it from his mind. He had no time for music just then. Dr. Simmons—who had been present professionally when most of the younger generation of Azalians came into the world—had a large part of the practice of Azalia and the outlying country, but left it mostly to Raymond. He was getting old, and was willing

enough to turn over to the younger man such cases as would consent to the substitution. So John was kept fairly busy, and had, besides, the advantage of Dr. Simmons' counsel, when confronted with some baffling medical problem. Sooner or later, however, the young doctor meant to get to New York, to spend perhaps a year in the hospitals there, and to study under more favorable conditions the close and deep relation between the body and the soul to which science has given the name of psychophysics. This branch of his profession had interested him more than anything else he had probed into as a medical student, and he wanted to learn all about it that modern research had brought out. Nowhere, he was sure, could he do that so well as in New York.

Raymond walked briskly about on this morning. It was one of his busy days. He saw that little Lucy Williams was progressing favorably with the measles and warned her mother not to let her take cold; put a fresh poultice on Franz Eberhardt's "run-around;" prescribed powders for Miss Crupp's nerves, and cheerfully poured a powder on her tongue, to show her how they were to be taken; gave Colonel Granger, landlord of the hotel, some advice as to his diet, and told him to take a calomel pill to relieve the fullness in

his head; looked at the plaster cast on the broken leg of Joe Dunning, the carpenter, as he lay in bed, fuming at the confinement, and went to half a dozen other places before getting into his buggy at the hotel, to drive out to the country.

There were a great many miles to be covered in the buggy outside of Azalia. Farms lie far apart in that region, and as the patients Doctor Raymond had to visit were all in farmers' families, the serviceable road mare he drove no doubt felt that she had earned her oats when at last she rounded Hunter's barn and came trotting down the white road on the homestretch. Raymond was hot and tired when, having delivered the rig to Sammy Granger —yawning, as usual, he walked toward home and supper.

John Raymond never could say certainly whether he had a premonition of evil that afternoon, even before he turned into his own street—whether some occult power brought to his consciousness a vague warning of what he would find when he had gone a hundred yards further. While he was not superstitious, he did believe there were psychic forces, unsuspected until late years, ever actively taking a part in human affairs. He thought afterward that he must have known something of what Adelina had to show him, when, white-faced

and trembling, she called to him as he was about to open his own gate, and asked him to come in and see her father.

"What is it, Addie? Is he ill?"

"I don't know," she answered, in a low, strained voice. "Please come."

"Of course I will."

He walked swiftly up the garden-path, past the flower-beds, where the pansies still bloomed, and through the porch to the interior of the house. The girl was close behind him.

Once inside, it was not necessary to ask her where he would find her father. The door of the music-room, on the left of the hall, was wide open. Stretched diagonally across the drugget which covered the centre of the otherwise bare floor, was Heinrich Von Hagen, face downward.

"Perhaps you'd better go out to the fresh air," whispered Raymond.

Adelina shook her head. She was already inside the room.

"I want to see," she said, hoarsely. "I moved his head a little before I went out, but his face frightened me, and I ran away, down the garden. Then I saw you coming, and now I am not afraid."

John Raymond gently forced her upon a chair near the door, and knelt by the side of the still

figure on the drugget. With the coolness of his profession—for he was now a physician, and nothing more—he placed his two hands underneath and turned over what a few minutes before had been Heinrich Von Hagen. In moving it, his doctor's instinct made him seize one of the wrists. His other hand went inside the waistcoat, to find the heart. There was a minute of silence, and then Raymond, looking pityingly at Adelina, said, as he pointed to a shattered violin on the floor:

"He was playing when stricken, evidently."

"Yes."

"Was he alone?"

"Yes. I was in the kitchen, getting supper."

"Well?"

"I heard him playing—a new piece of music he got from New York to-day—and then, just as he reached the most brilliant passage, at the end, he—he—broke down. It was so unusual for him to do anything of that kind that I stopped what I was doing in the kitchen, to listen. He went back to the beginning of the difficult part and tried again. He played not more than two measures, and then it seemed to me as if the violin screamed for help. Before I could move I heard him groan, and then fall."

She had taken one of John Raymond's hands

as he stood before her to hide what lay on the drugget. He regarded her anxiously and pressed two steady fingers against her wrist. Her pulse was galloping.

"You ran to him, and then went out of the house to look for assistance?" he suggested.

"Yes. But you have not told me. Is he—"

She did not finish the sentence, and Raymond nodded gravely.

"Cardiacal collapse," he said. "Heart failure. It was practically instantaneous. Come with me. My sister will take care of you. I will attend to everything necessary here."

He kept her hand as she rose from the chair, and carefully keeping between her and the drugget, led her out of the house and around to his own door, where Carrie met them, with a look of astonishment that made her eyes seem twice their natural size.

"Carrie, take her to your own room," said John Raymond. "She has had a great shock and needs quiet. Don't ask her questions."

Carrie wanted to ask a lot of questions, but, as her brother was not accustomed to giving peremptory orders except in his character of physician, she understood at once that he must be obeyed. She put an arm affectionately around

Adelina, while Raymond remained on the porch, watching them.

"My father is dead, Carrie."

This was said altogether too calmly to please the doctor. It did not speak well for the state of the nerves when a girl could tell without a quiver of such a happening. He gave Carrie a look which conveyed to her that she must not ask for details. So, with her arm still around Adelina, she murmured, sympathetically:

"I feared it was something like that, dear. Well, it comes to us all in a very few years. It may be that it's better when it is sudden. It spares lingering pain for those who are left behind, as well as for the one who passes away. Then you have the comfort of knowing that you always were a dutiful, affectionate daughter, and that he knew it, too."

Merely commonplace consolation, offered by a commonplace young woman. But who that has had a grief like Adelina's does not know how soothing these commonplaces can be to a bruised heart?

She wept quietly as she went up stairs with Carrie Raymond, while John returned to the house where, on the floor of the music-room, with upturned face, lay the dead man, a broken violin on one side of him and a bow on the other. Raymond

started involuntarily as he entered, for the setting sun, striking the drugget with a powerful shaft of red light, made a large rose in the pattern look like blood.

"Not so bad as that, thank heaven," he murmured, as he placed his handkerchief over the face. "A death like this is a tragedy under any circumstances, but I am glad he didn't do it himself. I have always been a little afraid of suicide with him."

In his quiet way, Raymond had long studied the grumpy musician, who had missed his road in the world somehow, and so had run into this obscure corner, to hide himself, a disappointed, resentful man. If the man's disgust had been active, instead of passive, he might have gone forth and fought and fought his way to success. It was because Von Hagen had always lacked healthy ambition that Raymond had been apprehensive of his falling into a despondency at some time or other which would end in the way suggested by that blood-red spot on the drugget.

Closing and locking both the front and back doors carefully, John Raymond went up to Solomon Potter's house, and, finding him warm and greasy, enjoying his supper in the society of his spouse, apologized to Mrs. Potter for disturbing

him at such a time, but begged the favor of a few words with him on business. The door leading to the living-room being open, on account of the heat, Raymond had stood in the shop and addressed the worthy lady from a respectful distance.

"You're quite excusable, Doctor," she replied, graciously. "Business must always come first, as I often says to Solomon. Only five minutes ago my very words was: 'Solomon,' I says, 'we never know,' says I, 'when you may be called on, and therefore,' I says, 'eat your supper while you have time, because if anyone comes to see you,' I says, 'you'll quit eatin' right there. Times are hard,' says I, 'and we can't afford to lose no chance to make an honest dollar just for the sake of supper,' I says."

While Mrs. Potter delivered herself of this harangue with her accustomed volubility, Solomon, with a regretful backward glance at his plate—he having just arrived at the huckleberry-pie stage of his repast—went out to the shop and stood at the front door, while his visitor told him, in a few words, that Heinrich Von Hagen was dead, and that the services of Mr. Potter, as undertaker, were required.

"Gosh! Is that so?" ejaculated Solomon, actually excited over the news—a remarkable thing for him, since he regarded death usually as simply

a slight boom in business. Then, raising his voice, he called out to his wife: "Hannah, what do you think? Doc Raymond says—"

"That I'm going to try to get Mr. Potter a regular boy to pump the organ this fall," interrupted John Raymond, quickly. "It's a shame to make the sexton do it, Mrs. Potter." Adding, in an undertone, to Solomon: "Don't tell anybody about the death till to-morrow. There are particular reasons."

"All right, Doc," whispered Solomon. "I didn't know."

"I hope you *will* be able to get a regular boy, Doctor," said Mrs. Potter. "I declare I get all wore out tryin' to keep clean shirts on my husband when he has to work at that plaguey organ. As I says to him, says I: 'You are paid to be sexton,' I says, 'not assistant organist. You ought to be paid for it,' I says, 'if they make you do it all the while,' I says, 'and you ought to get more than Professor Hagen,' says I, 'because you work harder than he does,' I says, 'and there couldn't be no music without you,' I says. So I'm glad to hear the music committee has took it up, Doctor Raymond, an' me an' my husband will give you a vote of thanks if you do get him a boy to pump that dratted organ reg'lar, an'——"

Mrs. Potter broke off suddenly, as Solomon, who had unobtrusively put on his coat and hat—which he kept in a closet in a corner of the shop, with the embalming-fluid bottles—went to the front door and slipped out to the street. She looked at her husband as if she could not believe her eyes. Then she asked, in an awed tone of wonder and incredulity:

"Surely you're not goin' out without eatin' your huckleberry-pie, Solomon Potter, are you?"

"I must," he replied, hastily. "Doc Raymond wants me to go at once."

"To see about the boy for the pump," explained Raymond.

"For the land's sake! Well, who *is* the boy? I know every boy in town, an' I can't think of one who'd be likely to stick to the job reg'lar. It ain't that Jimmy Swift, is it? No one couldn't place no dependence in him. 'Thout it's him, though, I dunno who you could get, 'cept one of the Poler boys, an' they ain't—"

Mrs. Potter might have gone on speculating indefinitely had not John Raymond cut her short by saying that the boy had not been selected yet, and dragged Solomon out of the quizzing zone by main strength.

"You understand, Mr. Potter," Raymond said

to him, as they walked away. "Miss Von Hagen is not in a condition to see anyone. Don't let it be known about town what has happened until to-morrow afternoon. I suppose we can't keep it from the public longer than that. Meanwhile, don't tell anybody."

"If we can keep it secret till to-morrow we'll be lucky. I'm awfully afraid my wife will corkscrew it out of me somehow before I go to sleep to-night," muttered Solomon Potter, dubiously.

## CHAPTER IX

"Yearning for the large excitement that the coming
years would yield,
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his
father's field."

Fortunately for his plan to give Adelina a little time in which to recover from the shock, by withholding the fact of her father's death from the public until the morrow, Doctor John Raymond, as assistant to Doctor Simmons, who held the office of Coroner for the county, was empowered to act as Deputy-Coroner. Being a physician, he could and did prepare a death certificate, which he duly signed. By a little stretching of the letter of the law, he had decided that an inquest was not necessary.

Adelina remained with Carrie that night, while John Raymond—having seen that Mr. Potter, after a trip to his shop for certain articles needed in his grisly calling, had made "him" look presentable, lying on what Solomon called a "cooling board"—sat down, with a book, in the music-room, to "watch."

It was a large funeral. Not often did Azalia enjoy the excitement of burying so prominent a fellow-citizen as Heinrich Von Hagen had been, and it made the most of the present occasion. Solomon Potter, as "funeral director," was proud of it. He had attended personally to every detail and, as he said, afterward, "everything was just right, from the corpse to the church bell." St. Jude's was crowded when the Reverend Thomas Treadhouse arose to begin the service.

The casket had been placed in front of the pulpit, and close to it sat Adelina, a solitary black-gowned figure which never moved. She was the only mourner. Those who could see her face, when the black veil was pushed back over her hat, said that she did not shed a tear. Why she did not Adelina herself could not have told. Possibly she had exhausted her grief and horror in that first outburst when she went up stairs with Carrie Raymond. She would miss her father because he was her father, and also because they two had been alone together for most of her life. But there never had been much affection between them. He was a morose sort of man, who felt that he had been ill-treated by the world, and in brooding over his own wrongs he had given little regard to the girl growing up under his eyes. On the other hand,

Adelina believed that if he had not compelled her mother to work so hard, and had been kinder to her generally, she might still be alive. Sometimes, in her secret heart, she had held her father the murderer of her mother.

So now, as she sat in a front pew, where she could see his dead face through the glass of the casket, while the minister spoke of his virtues, and especially of his usefulness to St. Jude's Church, as its organist for so many years, she listened calmly enough, only wondering, in a curious way, whether he really had merited all this eulogy.

At the end of the service the people fell into line and passed around the casket for a "last look," and then some of them walked behind the hearse to the cemetery at the edge of the town, where, in due course, that which they had followed was lowered into its grave, covered with earth, and left to itself under the willows.

"Come, Adelina."

It was Carrie Raymond speaking, and she took the girl's arm and led her away from the freshly-turned mound to the carriage.

"What shall I do now?" murmured Adelina, as she took her seat by the side of Carrie Raymond, John and his father sitting opposite.

The young doctor overheard the words, and he

noted that they were uttered, not as a helpless expression of bereavement, but in a tone half of perplexity and half of decision. What should she do? If she did not know what she would do, John Raymond could have told her.

Adelina went straight back to her own home after the funeral. She had arranged, by Raymond's advice, for Harriet Wylie to sleep in the house, so that she would not be alone. Harriet also was to assist in those domestic duties which cannot be neglected for long in any household, so long as people have to live. Harriet was a good girl, and Adelina found that she had plenty of time to look about her and settle up what estate her father had left. It was very little. He had owned the house they lived in, and there was a small sum of money in the Azalia bank which would not much more than pay the funeral expenses. At her request, John Raymond said he would put the house on the market.

"I could not live in it, even if I intended to stay in Azalia," she explained. "Sell it for as much as you can get, John, won't you?"

"Very well, Adelina."

He did not evince any astonishment that she intended to leave Azalia, nor did he say a word to dissuade her. She was a little disappointed that

he didn't. It looked as if he didn't care. While she would have disregarded any arguments he might have advanced to induce her to change her mind, she wished he had asked her not to go away. He hated the idea of her deserting Azalia, she knew. Many times he had told her he hoped she would always live there. He had even, since her father's death, and for the third time, asked her to become his wife, and she had declined. She was not ready to be married yet, she had said.

John Raymond, on his side, was not sure that he would be the lucky man even if she ever did consent to go to the altar. He knew he loved her, but how could he tell what were her real sentiments toward him? It was his opinion that she did not know them herself.

There was no demand for house property in Azalia just then, and the Von Hagen dwelling was not sold, although Raymond worked hard to find a purchaser. Meanwhile, Adelina was in communication with friends in New York. She had sent a copy of the Azalia *Clarion*, containing a notice of her father's demise, to Luigi Golfanti, and straightway had received a letter of sorrow and condolence, with an earnest hope that she would let him give her any assistance that might lie in his power. The letter warmed her heart. It was

as if she could hear Luigi's kindly voice in the queer, cramped, foreign handwriting, and feel his finger-tips pressing the outside of her elbows, as he looked his sympathy into her eyes. He said, in his letter, that Pietro sent his most respectful consideration, and hoped to have the happiness of seeing her again before long.

Adelina smiled when she came to this part of the epistle. She could imagine Pietro pouring forth burning sentences for his father to write, and Luigi cutting them down to the comparatively bald message she was reading. Her smile soon died out, however, as she began to meditate, holding the folded letter between two fingers and thoughtfully tapping the edge of it on the table. She sat thus for nearly half an hour, but, when at last she was disturbed by Harriet coming to ask her some question of domestic economy, she had arrived at a decision. After telling Harriet what she wanted to know, Adelina got out her desk and wrote an important letter to Luigi Golfanti.

It was three days before an answer came. When she read it her face brightened, and a slight tinge of pink stole into her pale cheeks. She went through the letter again, sitting in her bedroom, near the open window. Then she turned over several of the old opera scores, and, while she dropped

a tear or two upon them, gave utterance to a low laugh of pleasure, which had in it, somehow, a note of timidity. Just then she saw John Raymond coming up the garden-path. She went down stairs swiftly and met him in the music-room.

"I'm afraid it will be some time before we can sell this house, Addie," he said. "I've been to 'Squire Morgan again to-day. He says he'll dispose of the property some time or other, but he doesn't say when. If you wanted to rent it, that would be different. He could get you a tenant at once."

Adelina clapped her hands in satisfaction, while Raymond's brown cheek paled a little and his mouth tightened. He suspected the reason for her being pleased, perhaps.

"I want a tenant, John. I am going to leave Azalia as soon as I can get ready."

"Where are you going?"

"To New York."

She tried to say it carelessly, but it was not likely that such a tremendous resolve could fall from her lips without a tremor.

"I don't understand," he said. "You have no relatives there."

"Yes, I have."

"Oh, I beg your pardon. I did not know."

He was as stiff as a poker, and Adelina found it difficult to be at her ease. She tried, however.

"Yes, I have cousins there," she went on, turning to the piano and looking at the sheet of music, "Azalia—A Fragment," which lay open upon it.

"Ladies?"

"No."

"H'm!"

"It is my cousin, Luigi Golfanti, and his son, Pietro. Signor Golfanti told me, when he was here on that Saturday and Sunday, that my voice was good, but that it needed a little more training to make it perfect."

"And that he was the one person who could give it that training, I presume," interrupted John Raymond, bitterly.

She opened her eyes wide, as she turned around from the piano and faced him.

"Why, how did you know?" she asked. "I don't believe I ever mentioned it to you until now."

"You didn't," was the dry rejoinder. "But it did not demand extraordinary perspicacity to enable me to divine that a teacher of singing talking about your voice would naturally desire you for a pupil. I do not quite understand how you mean to live in New York, however."

"Then I'll tell you. Signor Golfanti will meet

me at the railroad station on my arrival in New York and take me to a respectable boarding-house, where he will have engaged a room for me in advance. I shall have enough money to last me for six months, even without the rent of this house, if I am careful. In that time I will take vocal lessons of him, and at the end of it I shall be so much improved that I may be able to sing in concerts."

"You don't mean in opera, then?"

"I don't know," she replied, thoughtfully. "I contemplate only concerts at present, and shall not aspire even to them for half a year, at least."

"The music committee, represented by 'Squire Morgan, have asked me to find out whether you will play the organ in church next Sunday, for congregational singing. They have had no music for two Sundays now. The quartette is disorganized, and everything has gone wrong."

"I am sorry for that," and she said it as if she meant it. "I will rehearse the organ music on Friday and play it on Sunday with pleasure. But I can only do it this once, I am afraid."

"Why?"

"I expect to be gone before the next Sunday," she replied.

John Raymond's face became white all over.

"So soon as that?" he faltered. "I did not

think you would be going for a month or two—if you went at all."

"Why not? There is nothing to wait for. If 'Squire Morgan can get a good tenant for the house, I suppose it ought to be rented. If not, it must remain empty. I almost think I should prefer to leave it just as it is, with all the furniture in it, until it is sold. We may be able to sell it at any time, you know."

Raymond did not know what to make of it all. He tried to gather his thoughts into a comprehension of what it would mean to him if Azalia no longer held Adelina—if he should continue to live there with no chance of seeing her over the dividing fence as he walked up and down the garden between his house and the front gate, of hearing her voice in St. Jude's choir, or of doing any of the little offices for her that had kept him busy at intervals, especially since her father's death. His brain, in its present confused state, was not equal to working it all out, and he gave up trying for the time being. So he told her he would inform the music committee, through 'Squire Morgan, that she would play the organ on Sunday next, and then he departed, more abruptly than she remembered him ever to have left her before.

True to her word, Adelina went to the church

on Friday evening—Solomon Potter having corralled a marble-playing boy in front of the hotel and dragged him, protesting, to the penitential cupboard, to pump—and played over on the organ all the hymns that were to be sung on Sunday. She had played the organ before, but not for service. The instrument was not a hard one, so far as the physical labor of the organist was concerned. There were no pedals, so that she had only her fingers to watch, and, as the music was simple, she ran through it without difficulty. There were three hymns for the morning service and three for evening, and that was all.

Adelina was alone in the church, save for Solomon Potter and the grumbling boy in the pumping closet, until she began the last hymn. Then, somewhat to her annoyance, Susan Treadhouse appeared in the choir gallery, from the side door.

"I hear that you are leaving us, Adelina?" she said, screaming into the girl's ear, to make herself heard above the organ.

Although she had played as loudly as she could, Adelina could not pretend that she had not heard the query, for Susan Treadhouse's voice had been injected into her ear so intimately that the pious lady's breath tickled her.

"Yes. I am going to New York next week."

"So I heard, but I couldn't believe it," went on Susan, very red in the face from the exertion of making Adelina hear. "Say, Addie, would you mind stopping for a moment? I feel as if something were cracking in my cheekbones when I shout so hard."

Adelina finished the hymn at that moment, so she was able to comply with the request without interfering with the music.

"The report is that you are going to study vocalism and give lessons. Is that so?" continued Susan.

Mrs. Treadhouse had seated herself on one end of the organ-bench, pushing Adelina along, and was primed for a series of questions. She wanted to know all about the girl's plans, and nothing in the nature of delicacy would stand in the way of her finding them out. Susan believed that the way to get information was to ask for it, eking out whatever she learned, when it was not complete, by jumping to conclusions.

"I shall give lessons in music, if I can get pupils, studying at the same time," was Adelina's reply.

"But why don't you stay here and marry Doctor Raymond? He'd have you, I'm sure. Then you'd live quiet and respectable, and be well thought of. Whereas, if you go to New York, you

don't know what will become of you. I've heard dreadful tales about girls who have gone there, and you know"—here Susan Treadhouse dropped her voice confidentially—"you are more likely to be led into temptation than some others."

"Why?"

Adelina put this monosyllabic query coldly, but the blood was surging wildly through her veins, and she knew what the reply would be before Mrs. Treadhouse, pursing up her lips and raising her eyebrows, purred insinuatingly:

"Your mother was an actress, you know."

Instantly the girl's eyes were ablaze, but the smug Susan did not notice them, any more than she realized how nearly Adelina was to breaking through all conventionalities, and, seizing the minister's wife by her skinny throat, shaking her till her false teeth fell out. It was a narrow escape for Mrs. Treadhouse, but the girl restrained herself, as she asked, in the same cold tone that she had used before:

"What has that to do with my being led into temptation in New York?"

Susan wriggled on the bench and held up one hand deprecatingly. She was about to say something which might have resulted in her being half-throttled, after all, but, fortunately, she happened

to glance at Adelina's face. What she saw there warned her, and she saved herself by saying, in a conciliatory way:

"Nothing, Addie, of course. What I came in for, when I heard the organ, was to tell you how sorry we all are that you are going. I hope you will like living in a large city."

"I think I shall," replied Adelina, and walked out of the gallery and church, leaving Susan Treadhouse still perched uncomfortably on the organ bench.

The days passed swiftly, and it seemed to John Raymond that the unhappy morning when he waited at his gate, looking up the garden at Adelina saying good-bye to Carrie and his father, had come before he had had time fairly to consider the astounding fact that she was going away out of her old life forever.

"You'll write to us, won't you, dear?" appealed Carrie, wiping a tear from her nose—for Miss Raymond, if she *was* a little frosty in general, was fond of Adelina in her wintry way.

"Of course I will. I shall tell you everything I am doing. But don't forget that I want to know when a certain event is to take place. Have you named the day yet?"

Adelina laughed and Carrie blushed. Miss

Raymond was engaged to a rising young lawyer of Chicago, who didn't object to frost, but only a very few persons in Azalia were aware of the tender romance.

"Not yet," replied Carrie. "You shall know when it is."

She kissed Adelina again, and Mr. Raymond, Senior, shaking her hand solemnly, wished her happiness, success and deliverance from all evil. Then, as John, carrying her handbag, looked at his watch nervously, she cast one more backward glance at the garden and home where she had spent many not unhappy hours, and walked away with him to the "depot."

An hour afterward, while Adelina looked thoughtfully out of the window of a musty car of the local train, hastening to connect with the main line for New York, John Raymond slipped into the garden which had been hers and plucked a purple pansy, which he fastened on the left lapel of his coat, over his heart.

## CHAPTER X

"My song I will not sell for gold;
Nor fame nor honor'll buy it."

Adelina, sitting on the edge of a narrow bed in a small back room on the fourth floor of a boarding-house in Thirty-eighth street, New York, stared disconsolately at the wall opposite, and silently wept.

There was some excuse for her depression even in the pattern of the wall-paper, aside from everything else. It was one of those weird designs, peculiar to boarding-house sleeping-chambers, in which garlands of impossible green roses and red sunflowers crawl lazily in and out of never-ending spirals, and awful half-human faces, contorted in sardonic mirth, spring suddenly out of the flowers and seem to gibber at you.

Mrs. Bates, the landlady, had just gone out of the room. She was a leathery woman, who had always been a lady, she said, accustomed to the best of everything. But her husband had "lost his fortune in Wall street," and she had been left a

widow, to fight the world alone. Incidentally, she gave the impression of being a fairly good rough-and-tumble fighter, who would hold out for her rights to the tap of the bell. She had told Adelina that the gentleman who had engaged the room for her, Signor Golfanti, with his son, used to board with her, and she knew them well. Otherwise, she would have wanted references from Miss Von Hagen.

"You has to be particular in New York, my dear, especially with ladies as you don't know. Signor Golfanti is a highly-respectable gentleman, and he told me all about you—that your father was dead, and you had come to New York to study voice culture. I told him that, under the circumstances, I should be willing to accommodate you, though my house is always full, and I only had this one hall room."

"This will do very nicely, Mrs. ——"

"Bates," supplied the landlady, quickly. "My husband's name was Clayton Bates, and I sometimes get called Mrs. Clayton by them as knowed him before he died. But 'Mrs. Bates' is what I ought to be called when I'm addressed correckly. I always get my rent in advance, but Signor Golfanti paid me for the first week. He said you'd pay him afterward."

"It was very kind of him, indeed," said Adelina, who had already opened her purse. "I didn't know he'd done that."

"Yes, he said you wasn't used to New York business ways, and might not think of it, and he didn't want me to have to ask for it, because, having just buried your father, your feelings was easily hurt. However, as I was saying, the rent is six dollars a week, and a dollar a week for the use of the py-anner in the parlor. My py-anner is a Brindleheimer—one of the best makers, you know."

Mrs. Bates might have talked for an hour and driven Adelina to distraction, but she was called down stairs as soon as she had contrived to mention the terms of rental, and the girl was left to contemplate the wall-paper and wonder whether she ever would get used to sleeping in this bare little room, which, besides the bed, had just space enough for her trunk and a rickety table, on which stood a hideous white pitcher and wash-bowl.

Adelina looked out of the window, and her heart sank lower. The denizens of Thirty-eighth street, as well as of Thirty-ninth street, the backs of whose houses faced her, seemed to do their washing all the week, for many of the pulley-lines that criss-crossed at varying heights over the arid yards and ancient wooden fences were full of flapping under-

garments, with sheets and towels here and there, and whole regiments of restless black stockings. Squads of beer-bottles, standing up in boxes, with tin boilers, iron kettles and an occasional geranium in a flower-pot, encumbered the rusty fire-escapes; bedclothes bulged out of many windows, and there was a general air of desolation and shiftlessness which was all horribly strange to this country girl. She had been quietly weeping, almost without knowing it. Thoughts that came to her mind now sent the tears in still greater volume down her cheeks.

She was contrasting this wilderness of brick-and-mortar, with its slimy gutters, close atmosphere and uncouth noises (for a man and woman were quarreling profanely, and, in a high key somewhere within her hearing, a parrot squawked at an open casement, and boys played boisterously with a yelping terrier in the yard below), with the peaceful beauty of her garden in Azalia, whence the scent of flowers was wafted into her window, and the only sounds to be heard were pleasant.

But she did not sit long gazing, with tear-wet cheeks, out of window or at the dreadful wall-paper. It was a bright morning outside, after all, and she was in New York, where she had wanted to be. So her spirits soon rose, as she opened her

trunk for a change of raiment, even though she *was* rather tired, for she had been travelling all night.

It had been her first experience in a sleeping-car, and she had had only fitful dozes, waking up often, with a convulsive clutch at nothing, as the train swung around a curve and rolled her about in her berth. She had been glad when the coming of daylight gave her an excuse to get up and make a dive for the dressing-room, innocently unaware of the wrathful disappointment of the elderly woman across the aisle, an experienced old traveller, who had intended to get there first and appropriate all the space in front of the most convenient mirror.

"I must write to Carrie," she told herself, when she had finished dressing. "I promised to let her know that I had arrived safely. I suppose I ought to send a letter to John, too. But—Well, I can mention him to Carrie. Let him write first. I have nothing to tell him about New York yet, when I haven't even been out of this room since I came into it. But a whole lot can have happened in Azalia since I left."

She felt as if she had been away a long time, and yet it was less than twenty-four hours before that she had been talking to John Raymond in the

music-room of her old home, telling him that the piano and furniture might as well remain there until they found a customer for the house. She could not bring herself to sell anything, and this plan would save the expense of moving and storage. Perhaps some day she might want to take all the things to New York. She had decided not to rent the house, even if a tenant could be obtained—which seemed harder to do than 'Squire Morgan had anticipated.

John Raymond had promised to look after the house, and to have a fire in the base-burner in the hall on damp days and when very cold weather came, so that the piano should not suffer. She had been grateful to him for this, and still more that he did not bring up the subject she most dreaded between them—her stage ambitions. She had brought all her music with her, including her mother's old opera scores and Pietro's "Fragment." She took them out of her trunk now and piled them up on the floor. There was nowhere else to put them in that cubby-hole of a bedroom. Then she sat on the bed again, her writing-case on her knee, and wrote her letter to Carrie.

"Tell John," she wrote at the end, "that I have a piano where I am living, and that I expect to be very comfortable."

"That isn't much to say to him," she murmured, as she sealed up the letter. "But he'll know."

John Raymond did know, and the knowledge made him thoughtful all the day on which the letter arrived and for many days afterward. She had begun her "career," and whether he were to be part of it or not would, he feared, depend on factors far beyond his control. As he thought, a purpose long in his mind slowly became a resolve.

"If I were there, not here, I could watch over her," were the words into which he put that resolve.

Adelina had money enough to live on frugally for several months. She knew that she must be very economical, but she began to feel hungry, and she had no idea of starving herself. She must find some modest restaurant and have dinner. She had promised to go in the afternoon to the home of Luigi Golfanti and his son, which Luigi had told her was not very far from Union Square, stay for supper, and have some music in the evening. She would take her first vocal lesson from Luigi the next day. It had been arranged, before she left Azalia, that she was to be his pupil, studying the method that had made her mother an operatic star.

It was with a sort of terrified delight that she

found herself alone, for the first time, in the streets of a great city. Luigi Golfanti had been with her when she was out before. He had met her at the railroad station and taken her in a cab, trunk and all, to Mrs. Bates's boarding-house. She had looked out of the cab window and enjoyed the novelty of her situation, but Luigi had talked continuously, and she had not been able to give undivided attention to her rapidly-changing surroundings. Now that she was by herself, however, she could take her time, and stop now and then, when any particular thing attracted her.

Once in Broadway, she walked slowly down the world-famous thoroughfare, passing a theatre or two on the way, and after paying her devoirs to each of the brilliant show-windows of a great department store, and permitting herself to be dazzled by the glittering gems and curiously-fashioned gold and silver ornaments displayed by a jeweler next door, she saw around the corner a restaurant with great plate-glass windows, behind which a man in a white linen cap and apron was making griddle-cakes with graceful nonchalance. Here she had luncheon—or dinner, as they would call it in Azalia—in the midst of a babble of voices and crashing of thick crockery that amused her, even if it did threaten her with a headache.

After her meal, she again discovered Broadway, and entered an open street-car traveling to her right, in accordance with Luigi's careful instructions. She asked the conductor to tell her when she should reach Seventeenth street. As she rode along she wondered why she did not feel more lonely. She was six hundred odd miles from Azalia, and in a strange city by herself. In the nature of things she ought to have been nearly frightened to death. Why wasn't she? Then she adjusted the incongruity by remembering that Luigi Golfanti, who had known her mother so well, had been with her that morning, and that she was going to see him now. Why, New York would soon be more like home to her than Azalia had been, especially after her father's death. She was glad she was going to see Luigi. But she did not think of Pietro.

The conductor pulled the bell and roared "S'enteent' street! H'yare, lady!" Then he worked himself along the foot-board, hand over hand, and, with one hand on the bell-rope, saw that she alighted safely. By the time she had reached the sidewalk the car was speeding away, and he had resumed a snarling argument with two peddlers who had slipped upon the back platform, each with a large basket, when the conductor was not looking, and which controversy had begun with his

savage sarcasm, "Hey! D'youse guys take this fer a freight-car or 'xpress-wagon?"

How the dispute ended Adelina did not hear or see, and she was sorry, because she had heard the opening verbal gun, and felt that it promised an exciting *denouement*. However, she supposed the squabble was an ordinary feature of metropolitan life, and no doubt she would come across another incident of the same kind before long.

Luigi Golfanti had given her explicit directions for finding his home, but it was nearly half an hour after alighting from the car that she found herself in a mean sort of street, which seemed to have run to seed, standing on the doorstep of an old-fashioned brick house, with a delicatessen store in the basement. She pushed an electric button on the door-post, above a square of black japanned tin, on which was the announcement:

GOLFANTI
(Operatic Method)
And Piano.
Teacher of Singing

Her finger had hardly left the button when she heard a tremendous clumping on the uncarpeted stairs, and then, as the door was flung open, Luigi Golfanti took her by the two elbows. She was

afraid he was going to kiss her on the cheek. But he didn't. Five little girls, going home from school, had stopped to inspect Adelina, whom they knew to be a stranger in that neighborhood, and certainly they would have told their mothers, who in turn would have been sure to spread the scandalous news, had the "old Eye-talian singin' teacher" kissed her in public.

"Come in, Adelina. Come up to the studio. Pietro has a pupil. Si. He teach the piano. I do the vocal. It is the more important. Eh? You understand. This way. The stairs are little dark. But that no matter. I hold your hand. Come. I lead you. So!"

Chattering all the way up stairs—while Pietro's pupil could be heard somewhere stumbling over five-finger exercises—Luigi led Adelina to the floor above and into a large room, where an open grand piano suggested the professional character of the occupants. An oil-stove on a small table, behind a portiere, and an open cupboard, in which could be seen crockery and half a loaf of bread, were a reminder that Luigi and Pietro kept bachelors' hall together. There were crumbs on the once white cloth which covered another, and larger, table, near the old-fashioned open fireplace, and Adelina felt that touch of pity which is engendered in any

womanly bosom by the slovenly housekeeping of a strictly masculine *mènage.*

She wouldn't have let him see it for the world.

"Oh, Signor Golfanti! Isn't this lovely?" exclaimed the girl, as she seated herself on the piano-stool, with her face to the room, and looked around.

"You like it?" asked Luigi, dubiously.

"Very much. It is so cozy, so original, so different from other homes!"

"H'm! Yes. It is different. I say to Pietro we have a way of our own that is not like anyone else. But he not always get the meals we like. The delicatessen it never have macaroni—only pigs' knuckles, sauer-kraut, pickles and beans. We have beans for dinner five times last week. Then I make Pietro buy a steak, and he cook it."

"Was it nice?"

Luigi looked at a door with the word "Studio" painted on it, and on the other side of which Pietro was engaged with his pupil. Then he answered, softly:

"Pietro good boy, but he not know how to grill a steak. That steak he black when cooked, and he taste like lump of coal. I not say anything. It would make Pietro feel bad. But the next day we go back to the beans."

"You have to depend on the delicatessen generally, then? That is too bad, Signor Golfanti."

He shook his head at her with a smile of rebuke.

"Not so bad as you call me 'Signor Golfanti,'" he said. "I wish you call me 'Luigi.'"

Adelina raised a protesting hand, and Luigi went on:

"I see. You think it would not do, because I older as you. I older than your mother. I have it. We are cousins, but you not call me 'cousin.' Say 'Uncle—Uncle Luigi.' Eh?"

He was so much in earnest that Adelina knew it must be so. She got up from the piano-stool and took his hand: "Very well, Uncle Luigi. I will, always."

He laughed aloud in his light-hearted way, and just then Pietro entered from the studio. The five-finger exercises had ceased several moments before, indicating that the lesson was over. He came forward quickly to greet her, a slight bashfulness in his manner, but pleasure sparkling in his dark eyes. She let go of Luigi's hand and took Pietro's with a cordiality which made the young man tingle all over.

"Pietro, I am very pleased to see you, and to be able to thank you by word of mouth for that piece

of music, 'Azalia—A Fragment.' It is beautiful. I hope it is more than a fragment now."

Pietro blushed, but could not find words to reply before his father broke in:

"He not finish it yet. That Pietro he seem not to know how to get his music into the notes. He have it in his head, all buzzing and flying about"—Luigi waved his hands about, the fingers outspread—"like the butterflies. But when he come to write it, whoof! they fly away, and he have nothing to put on paper."

"But I'll get it, father!" declared the young man, eagerly. "I'll get it, Adelina. It is here."

He touched his forehead and then his heart, with a quick and graceful gesture only possible to an Italian.

"Yes, it is there. That what I say, Pietro," laughed Luigi. "But while it stay there, what good is it to anybody else?"

"I'll find it, now that you have come, Adelina," said Pietro to her, in a low tone. "It will be yours, too, and I shall call it 'The Song of a Soul.'"

## CHAPTER XI

"I watch thy grace; and in its place
My heart a charmed slumber keeps,
While I muse upon thy face."

Pietro Golfanti might have stood statue-like and gazing into Adelina's eyes for an hour if his father had not intervened. In his brisk way, Luigi called his son to account for not clearing the cloth off the table and making the apartment presentable, while he himself pulled the portiere forward, to hide as much as possible of the chaos of oil-stove, crockery and loaf heretofore so shamelessly revealed.

"This is the first time Adelina come, and you let her see us in this miserable condition. I ashamed of you, Pietro."

"Nonsense, Uncle Luigi," interposed Adelina. "The place is charming. Everything is so 'cute.'"

"Si. The rumpled tablecloth, the spilled salt, the dirty dishes—they all 'cute.' But it would be more 'cute' if Pietro get to work and help me."

"I will, father. I didn't think for the moment," protested Pietro.

"No, you not think about anything. What you fussing with young Anton Rubinstein about? He your pupil, and he pay fifty cents a lesson. You ought not to fight with your bread and butter. I right, eh, Adelina?"

"Well, Uncle Luigi——"

"That right anyhow," interrupted Luigi, with his sunny smile. "You call me 'Uncle Luigi.' Buono! I like that. You quite right."

"It comes very easy for me to say it," she answered. "No uncle could be kinder than you."

"Mind you never call me anything else," he admonished her. Then, turning to Pietro, he repeated his query as to the cause of the dispute in the studio.

"The cause of it is that that idiot boy, Anton Rubinstein, will never play the piano," growled Pietro.

"It is for you to teach him, Pietro," Luigi reminded his son.

"How can I teach a boy like that—a thick puddenhead, with a bunch of wooden thumbs? Anton Rubinstein! How, in heaven's name, did such a dumb head and such awkward hands ever get a name like that?"

"Is he so bad?" asked Adelina, sympathetically.

"Bad?" echoed Pietro, clenching his fists as he strode up and down.

"Pietro!" called out Luigi, warning his son against a display of ill-temper.

"I don't care," came with a snap from Pietro. Then, stopping in his angry pacing, he swung around to Adelina, and said, with forced calmness: "Let me give you an example of that boy's stupidity. For weeks I have been laboring to knock into his timber head the names and positions of the notes on the piano."

"You have no patience, Pietro," interjected his father.

"This afternoon," continued Pietro, disregarding the remark, "after he had driven me nearly frantic with his imbecility, I believed I really had got something into him. So I pointed to middle 'C' on the instrument, like this." Pietro placed a finger on the "C" on the grand piano, and Adelina turned on the stool for an instant to look. "I said to him, 'What is this?' What do you suppose was the answer of Anton Rubinstein?"

Pietro's disgusted emphasis on this name made Adelina smile, in spite of her compassion for the young man in his distress.

"What did he say?" she asked.

"He took a long time to consider, while I kept

my finger on the 'C,' and at last, in his slow way, he bleated: 'It's the py-ano.' "

Pietro resumed his march, shaking his fists at the empty air, as he repeated, in an agonized voice, "The py-ano! The py-ano!"

Luigi regarded his son for a moment in silence. Then, winking slyly at Adelina, he said, argumentatively: "Well, it *was* the piano, wasn't it? Did you expect him to say it was a yellow clarinet?"

"I'll tell you what it is, father," declared Pietro, not heeding the banter. "That boy will come here one day too often, and they'll hang me for it."

"Pietro," said his father, "how often I remind you that the dumb pupils pay just as much as the clever ones—sometimes more, if you lie to them enough. Adelina, everyone in this profession knows that a music teacher builds up his reputation through his clever pupils, but he makes his living from the others."

Adelina laughed heartily at this outspoken admission, saying: "That was something my father never could understand. I remember he broke a violin on the head of one of his pupils who either could not, or would not, play his exercise correctly. If Anton Rubinstein isn't careful, perhaps Pietro will hit him over the head with the piano."

This sally made Pietro laugh, notwithstanding

his anger, and soon they forgot the unlucky Anton in talking about Adelina's plans and prospects.

"When shall I begin my lessons with you, Uncle?" she asked.

"Now, if you are not too tired," answered Luigi, as Adelina turned to the piano and rippled off a chromatic scale with an evenness and precision that made Pietro gaze admiringly at the white fingers as they glided up and down the keyboard.

She looked laughingly at Luigi and asked him if that sounded as if she were tired. He shook his head.

"No, carissima—not your fingers. They run about the piano like little white mice. But the voice, he tire when the fingers are not."

"I don't think my voice is tired, Uncle Luigi."

"So? Well, we try. Sing this exercise."

He placed before her an open instruction book and pointed to the top of a page.

"That's not difficult, Uncle Luigi."

"No, it is not difficult. That's why I give it to you, for the first lesson. We find plenty more in the book which will be harder, by-and-bye. So! Begin!"

Pietro stood behind her, his gaze fixed admiringly on her golden-brown hair, while Luigi, drawing a chair to her side, took out a pencil and pre-

pared to beat time with it on the end of the keyboard. He was the instructor now, and Adelina had become his pupil and nothing more.

She began to exercise, a series of rapid triplets in the middle register, and had sung three or four bars, when he brought down his pencil with a sharp rap, accompanied by a peremptory "Stop!"

Adelina obeyed and looked at him in surprise. He was shaking his head violently and frowning.

"No, no. That will not do. It will not do. I tell it to my pupils so often, get the wind back of the tone and keep it there. Do not let the wind come out all around the sounds. The vowel 'Ah.' Listen."

He sounded a long broad "A."

"So!" he ejaculated. "Do it like that."

She sang the "A," and to an ordinary listener it would have seemed identical with his own, allowing for the difference in their voices. But it did not suit the exacting instructor, for he almost shouted, while he struck a nervous tattoo with the pencil:

"No, no! Do not push it out. Let it float. Do not punch it out. Let the wind do it, but do not let the tone know the wind he does do it. Now, the vowel 'Ah.' Now!"

Again Adelina tried to please him, but again

she failed. Only that she knew how conscientiously he was working with her, and because she was determined to conquer the obstacle, whatever it was, that stood in the way of her attaining his standard of perfection, she would have been inclined to give up trying. Never had she been under so sternly critical a teacher. But—as she knew in her heart—never had she found one so anxious to educate her into a great singer.

Luigi was not thinking of anything but getting from Adelina the exact tone he wanted. With a perfectly serious face, he explained his meaning in parable:

"The dog, he bark—he punch out the tone. The sheep, he bleat—squeeze the tone through the nose. The bull, he bellow—blow it out in a lump. The bird—ah, the bird!—he just let it come. He sing pianissimo, piano, crescendo, forte, fortissimo, all the same as he fly. Now, try."

He had imitated comically the sounds made by the dog, the sheep and the bull, although quite evidently nothing was further from his intention than making a jest of the performance. When he came to the bird he raised his hands, higher and higher, as the imaginary melody he described increased in volume, while his face showed that his thoughts were up with the bird itself over the tree-tops.

"Ah!" sang Adelina.

"Buono!"

"Ah!"

"Better! Now, the exercise," touching the book with the end of his pencil.

She sang the first two lines, while Luigi kept time with his pencil in the air. Finally, with the quick double stroke with which a conductor stops his orchestra, he told her that would do.

"We not wear you out the first time, Adelina," he added, dropping the austerity of the teacher, to become again the affectionate and laughing Uncle Luigi.

"My voice is not fatigued, uncle," she protested. "I can sing for hours. You heard me in the choir in Azalia—at two services. They did not spare my voice there."

"That was different. You not singing in the choir now. Perhaps you never will. It is more likely you be in grand opera house when you have been with me a year. That is why I careful. You understand?"

"Yes, uncle."

Then we begin to see about supper, I and Pietro. We have been long time over the lesson—much longer than you think. Time he fly when we do what we like, eh? Pietro, what is for supper?"

Pietro looked rather miserable at the question, and did not immediately answer. Then he mumbled something about "delicatessen."

"What?" roared Luigi. "Beans?"

"No. There are other things in the store besides beans," retorted his son, angrily.

"Nothing that is any better. But we must have something that Adelina can eat. What shall we do?"

"Don't distress yourself, Uncle Luigi," begged Adelina. "I can eat anything. You must have seen that when you were in Azalia. Besides, you know something about my appetite when I was a little girl."

"We must have steak, or chops, or something like that," he said.

Adelina rubbed her hands together gleefully.

"And I'll cook them. You have the dearest little oil-stove over there. It will be great fun to me. Shall I go out and buy the meat?"

"No. You lose yourself. I go. Pietro, you get the table ready. What meat I get, Adelina? Which you rather have?"

"Anything, Uncle. But chops make so much smoke and smell. Suppose you bring a steak."

"Buono! I wish we could have some spaghetti, too. Never mind. I bring the steak."

He was outside the room ere he had ceased to talk, and, as the door closed, they could hear him still saying something about the steak on his way down stairs.

Adelina ran over to the oil-stove, with an air of taking command that clinched another rivet in the fascination she had girded about poor Pietro. She asked for a rag, so that she could wipe the dust and grease from the oil-stove. That was the first thing to be done, she said.

"I have thought of you a great deal since I saw you in Azalia," said Pietro, as he tore a clean pocket-handkerchief in two, and gave her half of it for a duster. "You, know, I had heard my father say so much about you, that, although I had never seen much of you as a child, I felt as if we weren't strangers."

"That was my feeling, Pietro," she replied, kindly enough, but without any of the sentiment that made the young man's voice quaver. "My father had mentioned your father many times. Get me the salt. Have you any butter? We shall need some. Where's the frying-pan?"

Pietro came to her with a bag of salt in one hand, and a triangular smeary mass of butter, still in the thin wooden dish in which it had come from the store, in the other. She took the things smil-

ingly, but with an inward shiver as she looked at the disreputable butter.

"Do you know, Adelina, when I am writing music——"

"Now the frying-pan, Pietro. Oh, my! It is all full of hard grease. We must warm it over the fire and wipe it out. Where are the matches?"

"Here they are. Yes, when I am trying to put my fancies into a harmony that will express—"

"This frying-pan. What was it used for last? Not fish, was it?"

"No. Beans, I think. But, Adelina, won't you let me tell you what a wonderful influence for good that visit to Azalia had on me?"

"A change is beneficial to anyone. I am glad Azalia agreed with you."

She was busily wiping out the frying-pan—first with paper and then with the other half of the handkerchief. Pietro thought her more attractive than ever. Her face was flushed with the excitement of her novel situation, as cook for two bachelors, and she was so active, and her hands remained so white, in spite of the frying-pan, that poor Pietro was in a piteous state of infatuation, indeed.

But how he did wish she would be serious with him! He had thought and dreamed of her, day and night, ever since that Sunday in Azalia, when he

had hung upon her voice as she sung at St. Jude's. When he knew she was coming to New York he had fully made up his mind to declare himself and force her to give him some hope in return. Now she was here, and, do what he would, he found himself of less importance in her eyes than a greasy frying-pan! It was that country doctor, of course. He was in love with her, Pietro knew, and most likely they were engaged to be married. That was why she had no desire to listen to the conversation of one who would understand her as that Raymond never could.

"But I am here, and he is far away. That is in my favor," he muttered, as he went to the cupboard in response to Adelina's abrupt demand for a clean plate—for the steak, when it should come in.

"What did you say, Pietro?"

"Nothing. I was only humming a bar or two of my 'Song of a Soul,'" he answered, with a slightly bitter emphasis on the title of his composition.

She made no comment on this, but kept on bustling about with her culinary preparations, while he laid the cloth disconsolately.

"There he is, back," said Pietro, in an uninterested tone. "I hear him on the stairs."

"Who, Uncle Luigi?"

"Yes."

Luigi breezed into the room, holding aloft in his right hand a goodly-sized steak in a paper-bag, while the open mouth of another bag under his left arm revealed tomatoes and a lettuce.

"I come back," he proclaimed, superfluously. "If this not a tender steak, I go back and kill the butcher. We will have a salad. I make him myself. Get the oil and vinegar, Pietro."

"I'm busy," growled Pietro. "I have to help Adelina cook the steak."

"Si. That is right," assented Luigi, with undisturbed good temper. "I get the things for the salad myself. You help Adelina."

There never had been such a meal prepared and eaten in the Golfanti apartments. Luigi pronounced it magnificent, giving all the credit for it to Adelina's cooking of the steak, although she insisted that the salad, in which no one had a hand but himself, was the star dish of the menu. Fortunately for the butcher, the steak was tender and juicy.

There was music and lots of chat after dinner, and it was nearly nine o'clock when Luigi and Pietro walked to Broadway, with Adelina between them, to see her home.

"Here the car comes, Adelina," said Luigi. "It won't take long for us to ride up to Thirty-eighth street."

"Can't we walk, Uncle Luigi? It is such a beautiful evening."

"Si. It is not far. But we must not make you tired."

"I am a country girl, remember. I am used to long walks," she said. "This little distance will be nothing."

So the three strolled up Broadway, with its dazzling electric lights, its throngs of sauntering men and women, its musical jingle of street-cars, its gay theatre entrances and hotel cafés, and its general atmosphere of reckless gaiety—smothering out of sight the misery that lurked beneath, so close to the surface, as if it were not there at all.

Adelina was too delighted to talk, or to notice whether her companions did so or not, and she took as little heed of Luigi's ceaseless chatter as of Pietro's brooding muteness.

"Good night, Uncle Luigi," she said, as in due time, they stood at the foot of the brownstone steps of Mrs. Bates's boarding-house. "I shall come to you on Thursday for another lesson. Meanwhile, I'll practice that exercise very hard."

"Si. I like to hear you say that. Addio."

She shook hands with both of them, and then ran up the steps. As she opened the door with the key Mrs. Bates had given her, she waved a playful farewell to Pietro, who was looking back. Then she went in, and a minute or two later found herself in her gaunt little back room at the top of the house.

"What a delightful time I have had on my first evening in New York," she murmured, as she locked herself in.

But afterward she cried herself to sleep, nevertheless.

## CHAPTER XII.

"How beautiful is this house! The atmosphere
Breathes rest and comfort, and the many chambers
Seem full of welcomes."

Adelina breakfasted at the plate-glass restaurant she had patronized for luncheon the day before. Then she returned to the boarding-house and sought Mrs. Bates's "parlor," to use the piano, in accordance with the dollar a week arrangement made for her by Luigi Golfanti. A dank, gloomy, stuffy apartment was this *salon*. It was pervaded by a peculiar odor, as of the fumes of stale tobacco rising from a charnel-house. When Adelina opened the piano, which was an old-fashioned square, the smell waxed much stronger, and— as she told Luigi afterward—she half feared that the talented Mr. Brindleheimer, with a cigar in his mouth, had died inside the precious instrument which bore his name, and had never been found.

Once fairly at her work, however, Adelina forgot all about the smell and sordidness of the place. She had raised a window-shade, so that she could read her music, and went through her practice in

as self-concentrated a way as ever she had done it in her own rose-scented music-room in Azalia. Once Mrs. Bates opened the door and looked in. But Adelina was executing a difficult cadenza just then, and did not hear her. So Mrs. Bates, after listening for a few moments and making sure that the gas had not been lighted—for she well knew it would be too dark to see without it unless the window-shade were raised—quietly withdrew about her business.

Adelina could think about other things while she sang, for both singing and playing had become second nature. She read the notes and played them mechanically on the piano, while her familiarity with all her exercises and selections enabled her to sing them without conscious effort of brain. So it was that she busily reviewed her life and speculated on the future for an hour before she stopped and looked at an old yellow-faced clock—with too much gilding and rococo decoration to be respectable—which ticked funereally on the mantel-piece, to see what time it was.

"Half-past ten. Well, I'll practice till half-past eleven, and then I'll go out for a walk," she decided. "I wonder what John is doing. Somehow, I have been thinking about him ever since I came down stairs. Surely there cannot be any connec-

tion in my mind between him and this room, because both of them are so stiff and proper—and dismal."

The next moment she rebuked herself for the unkind thought, even though it *had* been more than half in fun. She almost wished she had written to him directly, instead of only referring to him in her letter to Carrie. It was true he never understood her, and he always made her unhappy when she said anything which reminded him, ever so distantly, of the great ambition of her life. But that his regard for her was sincere she could not doubt. What a splendid brother he would have made! For that matter, he had filled the part of a brother to her ever since, as a child, she had first been taken to Azalia. He had always kept a big-brotherly eye on her, and it had been as natural to appeal to "Jacky" when she was in any sort of distress or difficulty as if they really had been brother and sister.

But—a brother is not everything to a girl, and Adelina doubted whether she ever could accept John Raymond in any other relation. Had he been in sympathy with her aspirations it might have been different. But he was not even musical. He could not "carry a tune," as they said in Azalia, and although he enjoyed listening to singing, es-

pecially hers, he never attempted to sing himself. Perhaps the reason that he seemed to like hers so much was that he liked her. She smiled at this thought—inwardly, for she could not screw her mouth up into a smile while she was singing. Then she wished he didn't like her, only to find that such a wish was accompanied by a little ache in her heart. How did she really feel toward him?

She kept on singing. She never had been able to answer that question to her satisfaction. It is perhaps worthy of remark that, in all her debate with herself as to what was John Raymond's exact place in her regard, she never even thought of Pietro.

It was nearly noon when at last she got up from the stool and closed the heavy, double-hinged lid of the big square piano, shutting in part of the Brindleheimer effluvia, but leaving enough floating about to save the room from losing its distinctive flavor. She carried her music books up to her bedroom. There were inquisitive boarders in Mrs. Bates's *pension* who used the parlor in the evening, some of whom were partly responsible for the stale tobacco, who would be sure to thumb through her music, none too tenderly. Adelina had seen some of these boarders on the staircase, and she didn't like the look of them, particularly the over-dressed

young lady, with a mop of light yellow hair and watery eyes, who had smiled at her in a friendly way as she passed.

When Adelina went out for her walk she saw enough to keep her mind engaged, without letting it brood over her personal perplexities. Like most people who visit New York for the first time, she marveled at its vastness. She was awed by the apparently endless avenues and streets, even more than by its towering buildings. She had heard in Azalia about the "skyscrapers," and was prepared for them. In fact, she experienced a little disappointment that they were not higher. The Azalia estimate was that most of them brushed the clouds, even if the roofs were not appreciably close to the moon. As for Madison Square Garden, the "Flat-iron" building, and the two great opera houses, where Nordica, Caruso, Mary Garden, Sembrich, Eames and the rest of the famous stars sang in grand opera, new and old, they were so familiar to her by hearsay that she recognized them at once. She made a special trip down Thirty-fourth street to see the Manhattan, and at the Metropolitan walked into the spacious lobby just to feel that she was under the roof which had sheltered so many great songsters.

Late in the afternoon she practiced her exercise

for another hour, with the aid of the Brindleheimer monstrosity, and then went for supper to her plate-glass restaurant, where the flapjack artist, in his white cap and apron, was still at his endless task. She spent the evening in her bedroom, reading, and when she went to bed, after her exciting day, she fell asleep without crying.

It was just as Adelina was about to leave the house, the next afternoon, to go to Uncle Luigi's for her lesson, that Mrs. Bates intercepted her in the hall. There was a hard smirk on the landlady's weazened face, and the girl prepared herself for battle.

"Miss Von Hagen, may I speak to you a moment?"

Adelina stopped and waited for what was coming. She knew, somehow, that Mrs. Bates's communication would not be pleasant.

"Er—times are very hard, Miss Von Hagen."

"Are they?"

Adelina said this mechanically. She had heard people in Azalia make that assertion about "hard times" so often, that it had lost its meaning for her.

"Yes. I never seen 'em worse. What with the big rent, and the wear and tear of furniture, and the gas, and all them things, I can't hardly get along. Of course, six dollars a week for a nice airy room like you've got, with light and heat throwed

in, is very cheap. There ain't another house in this part of the city where you could get such a room for less than ten."

Mrs. Bates paused for breath, and Adelina was tempted to remind her that, as it was early in September, there was no artificial heat in her room. But she immediately decided that it was not worth while, so she said nothing and let the landlady go on.

"So I want to ask if you'd mind doubling up?"

"Doubling up?" repeated Adelina, bewildered.

"Yes. Take another lady into your room with you. She is a very nice, hard-working girl. I've knowed her for years. She's a manicure."

"But—"

"Well, of course, as I say, six dollars is too little for your room, and, unless you'll agree to double up with this lady I speak of, I shall have to make your rent eight dollars after this week."

The absurd impossibility of two persons occupying the little hall room was manifest, and Adelina answered coldly that she would move at the end of the week, for which her rent had been paid.

"Very well, Miss Von Hagen. That will be Monday. Signor Golfanti engaged the room for you that day, and though you didn't sleep in it on Monday night, of course it was yours if you'd been

here. I'll tell the other lady she can move in on Monday morning, and I must ask you kindly to have your trunk taken out by then."

Mrs. Bates flounced away to her lower regions, and Adelina went to Uncle Luigi for advice.

"So! The fool old woman!" was Luigi's explosive exclamation, when Adelina had told her story. "What she think you are—sardine? I give Mrs. Bates piece of my mind when I see her—good large piece, too. Maladetta!"

"I could kill her!" put in Pietro, whose indignation had kept him silent till now.

"That would not help the situation, Pietro," laughed Adelina. "What troubles me is to know where I shall find another room. I'm afraid I shall have to depend on Uncle Luigi, as I did before."

"Si. I will get you a nice room—nicer than old Bates's, in a fine place, where it is quiet and respectable. Si. That will be easy. Now, your lesson. Sit down at the piano."

The lesson went on in about the same way as had the other, two days before. Luigi was insistent that she must sing exactly as he desired, and he did not spare her a scolding once, when he considered it deserved. Pietro had gone into the studio, and was engaged with a pupil—not Anton Rubinstein, this time.

"You have improved much since Tuesday," Luigi told her. "You listen what I tell you to do, and you try to do it. You will be a great singer, Adelina. Ah, I wish I had you always where I could watch you when you practice, and correct you whenever you make little mistake. I would get you on so much faster—so much faster. Now I give you lesson, and you go away for two days. You practice by yourself. I not there to help when you get to hard place, and you must—what you call?—flounder, till I see you again. It is a pity that you cannot have me all the time, so that—"

His grumbling stopped all at once, and jumping up from his chair, he strode rapidly up and down the room, his expressive hands and arms beating the air this way and that, in unison with his thoughts. Adelina looked at him expectantly. She knew some plan was revolving in his brain, and that he was endeavoring to mold it into coherent form. The sound of the piano in the studio, where Pietro was giving his lesson, came faintly to her ear at intervals. Then it stopped altogether. The lesson had ended. As Pietro entered the room, his father ran to him, embraced him—outside of his arms—and shouted:

"Pietro, we'll do it!"

"Do what?" demanded Pietro, who had not the

slightest idea of what was passing in his father's mind.

"Adelina! She will live with us." Then, turning to the girl: "That's what I mean, Adelina."

She looked at him as if she wondered whether he had lost his senses.

"Uncle Luigi!"

"Si. That is so. I am your uncle. Never forget that. Well, I take care of my niece. That old woman, Mrs. Bates, not insult her again. Adelina have home of her own, where she will be queen, and no landlady will dare speak to her. Look. Here the way we do. Pietro and I have this big room, and other little room where we sleep. Buono! Then there is the studio, where Pietro give his lesson, while I have my pupil in here. So! Now we take that other room over there, where the door is locked. It is empty. The landlord want me to take it. I tell him last week I not want it. Now we get it."

"But, Uncle—"

Luigi laid a hand caressingly on her shoulder.

"Don't speak till I tell you all, Adelina. We do this: I tell the landlord we will rent that other room. He let me have it cheap. It shall be your room. It larger than the one at Mrs. Bates's, and not cost so much. You pay the rent of that room

yourself. Then you keep house for me and Pietro, and I give you lessons for doing it. So! It will be all business, you see. But I shall be able always to listen when you practice, and you use this piano."

"But, don't you think people might talk, and—"

"Pouf! What they say? I your uncle, and Pietro your cousin."

Pietro nodded energetically.

"Well," continued Luigi. "Your uncle have right to let his niece live with him. You will be like my daughter. That all."

There was more discussion, and at last Adelina was brought to see the idea in the same light as did Luigi. It had appealed powerfully to Pietro from the beginning.

"You *do* need someone to cook for you, and to see that the rooms are swept and dusted," she said, slowly, as she thought of the muddle the place had been in the first time she saw it, and recollections of the greasy frying-pan forced themselves upon her.

"Si," assented Luigi, cheerfully. "Mrs. Vittorio, who live up stairs, she come and sweep sometimes. She good woman. Her husband dead, and she have to work hard. Sometimes she go on as 'extra' at theatre. Then she cannot come to sweep,

and the rooms they get so dusty I sneeze all day. Eh, Pietro?"

"I sweep them, don't I, father?" said Pietro, in a slightly injured tone.

"Si. You do, Pietro. That when I sneeze. But now, when Adelina come, she have Mrs. Vittorio do it, and when she not able to come, she find another woman. Oh, it will be fine. La, la, la!"

Luigi caught Adelina and Pietro each by the hand and danced joyously, whirling them both around, so that, in self-defence, they were obliged to join hands with each other, forming a ring. Foolish folk, weren't they? But they were happy, and all three had Italian blood in them.

Next Monday Adelina's trunk was in the additional room of the Golfanti suite, and she became mistress of the household of her Uncle Luigi and Cousin Pietro.

"This seems like home," she said to Luigi, as, having looked with delight about her own cozy chamber, she came into the large room where the grand piano was, with a feeling of ownership that she had hardly expected ever to experience again when she walked out of the garden in Azalia for the last time.

"It *is* your home," Luigi reminded her.

"I hope you'll be happy in it, Adelina," added poor love-lorn Pietro.

## CHAPTER XIII

"'How does he love me?'
"'With adorations, with fertile tears,
With groans that thunder love, with sighs of fire.'"

It was nothing less than amazing to Luigi Golfanti that he and Pietro had been able to live at all before Adelina came. Neither had realized what a wretched makeshift their existence was when they were blundering along without her. Now it was all so different. She dropped easily and naturally into the position of mother of the family—as she said merrily to Pietro, on the second day, when she took a needle and thread out of his awkward fingers and sewed a button on his coat, after he had boggled at it helplessly for a few seconds. It was not only that she cut down the trade of the delicatessen store in the basement, by buying uncooked food and preparing it for consumption on the ever-useful oil-stove. She saw, as only a woman could, that there were a hundred holes and corners in the housekeeping through which money dribbled and was lost, and which money could easily be saved by ordinary economy. The sheets and tablecloths

had been permitted to go to ruin for lack of a few stitches when they began to give way. Odds and ends of butter, sugar and cheese were wasted. Eggs hid behind dishes and cups in the cupboard, and became unusable. Dust accumulated on the piano, while cigarette-ends (Luigi smoked a great many cigarettes), fell inside the instrument and threatened to clog the action. And all this had been going on for years.

Adelina went through the apartments like a genius of order and renovation. In less than a week the place looked altogether different. Also, it smelled better.

Before she had finished the work of bringing the rooms to a satisfactory state of cleanliness and tidiness she insisted that Luigi and Pietro should submit their wardrobe to her for inspection. They could not do so all at once. Not that either had a large stock of clothing, but because most of it was on their persons during their waking hours.

"I have only two coats, Adelina," explained Luigi, apologetically. "One is light and the other dark. Which one you want to see first? Then I can put on the other."

"Either one, Uncle."

"They both laughed, as if it were a joke to be poor. Perhaps that *was* the view they took of it,

for Luigi never had outgrown his boyish carelessness over money matters, while to Adelina, because the actual gripe of poverty had always been unknown to her, worldly possessions were of no particular consequence. Her father had never stinted her in housekeeping money, and she had taken plenty for granted.

"I have three full suits," volunteered Pietro.

"Si, and none of them will fit me," said Luigi, with mock regret. "But you may be able to alter them so that I can wear them—eh, Adelina?"

He broke into a hurricane of mirth, in which Adelina was obliged to join, and even Pietro, who had been in one of his frequent trances of adoration, allowed himself to laugh soberly.

Adelina took her regular two lessons a week of Luigi, but generally, as she practiced every day, he was near, to give a helpful hint or tell her when she was wrong, so that virtually she had a lesson daily. But he was not always with her. There were hours when she was alone, for both Luigi and Pietro were compelled often to go to the homes of some of their pupils. At such times it delighted her to surprise them with some favorite dish for dinner or supper when they returned, tired and hungry, after a long, disheartening endeavor to beat music into unmusical people. Luigi had

taught her to prepare spaghetti in the Neapolitan style, and it was a common assertion of his that she never could have attained such perfection in the art —he called cooking spaghetti an art—if she had not been the daughter of an Italian mother.

Carrie Raymond wrote to her twice, telling her the striking news of Azalia. How Daddy Wylie had got the increase in his pension that he had been after for twenty years; how Susan Treadhouse was back in the choir, and had defied the music committee ever to put her out again; how Adelina's black Spanish rooster, which John had placed in the care of Mrs. Ehrhardt, had got in with that lady's white leghorn rooster one day, and nearly killed him before the Spanish pirate could be driven off with a broom; how Professor Theophilus Cooper had announced that he was coming to Azalia again, to give his lecture on hypnotism and mental suggestion in the Town Hall, and how she and John were going to hear him, and hoped to persuade their father to go, too.

John Raymond also wrote once. His letter was of a business complexion. He said he did not think the house could be sold until the spring, but that he was looking after the furniture, and that everything, including the piano, was in good condition. He hoped she found her study with Signor

Golfanti had been beneficial, and that the air of New York agreed with her. He said they all missed her very much, and that her friends were counting on seeing her among them again within a year at most. He did not understand exactly how she was living in the same house with Luigi Golfanti and his son, but supposed it was a convenient arrangement. There was more of the same sort of thing, but not a word about his suffering from her absence, nor of his going into the garden every day for a pansy, to wear on his coal-lapel, over his aching heart. Perhaps she had forgotten what she had once told him about the curative effect of that flower, or, if it ever occurred to her, no doubt she thought of it only as a foolish superstition. Possibly, and yet—who knows?

Adelina answered John's letter. She said her singing voice was improving under the tuition of her Uncle, Signor Golfanti, and she was very glad she had come to New York. She mentioned casually that she was acting as housekeeper for Signor Golfanti and his son Pietro, and that it was quite like home. She had not been to the opera yet, because there was none at that time of year, but she intended to go with her uncle and cousin when the season opened—up in the gallery. She would not be able to afford to go in any other part of the

house, because the prices were so high—five dollars a seat in the parquette. But Uncle Luigi said the gallery was the best place to hear, on account of the sound rising, and that he would go there, in preference to the parquette or dress-circle, even if he had millions of dollars. She signed herself "Always yours sincerely, Adelina Von Hagen."

Had she a set purpose in using this form of signature? That was what John Raymond tried to decide as he pored over the letter in his den—known in the Raymond home as "the doctor's library"—for hours after his father and sister were enjoying the sleep of the pious and good in their respective beds.

John dissected the "Always yours sincerely" word by word. "Always?" That was comforting, to begin with. She always had been his, and she always would be. Of course, she desired to remind him of the fact. If she really meant that, what need to worry? "Yours?" Yes, she *was* his. She admitted it. Moreover, she was *always* his, as the first word had told him. Then, to clinch it, she had added the assurance "sincerely." That was a beautiful word—sincerely. In this connection it could only mean that she wanted him to understand she was sincere, and that he could depend on her, no matter though she was temporarily out of his life.

He wished, however, she had been content to call herself simply "Adelina." Surely the addition of her surname was unnecessary. She was "Adelina" to him—always had been. She couldn't expect him to think of her as "Miss Von Hagen," could she?

He turned it over and over in his mind, as he smoothed the letter out on the table, under the strong light of his green-shaded student lamp, but never was he entirely satisfied. He put one part of the signature against another, and weighed with nicety each sentence she had written throughout the entire letter. At the end he found himself where he had been at the beginning—in a slough of perplexity and tormenting doubt that made him sigh and pace up and down the room frowningly for many minutes at a time. It was nearly daylight when he went to bed, but as he lay down the problem which had been distressing him for hours was solved, at least to the extent that he had made up his mind what to do.

John Raymond was very busy for the next two weeks, frequently consulting with Dr. Simmons and 'Squire Morgan, and holding earnest conversations with his father and sister. The general population were not taken into his confidence, but somehow it leaked out that "Doc'" Raymond contemplated going away from town, to "learn to be a better doc-

tor," as Mrs. Solomon Potter phrased it, when talking it over with Miss Crupp and Mrs. Wilkins. Mrs. Potter had not heard the "perticklers," but she understood he was going to New York, to spend his time in the hospitals, where he would have a chance to operate on patients at "clintericks." Miss Crupp opined, sonorously, that possibly Mrs. Potter meant to say "clinics." But the good lady took the correction in very ill part, remarking, in a lofty tone, that Miss Crupp was mistaken—that while Miss Crupp might have "clinics" in her mind, she (Mrs. Potter) meant what she said, which was "clintericks." This point disposed of, the discussion of "Doc" Raymond's going away was resumed, the final decision being that it would be a good thing for him.

It was not overlooked by the gossips that Addie Von Hagen was in New York, and that more than likely this was one of the reasons "Doc" wanted to go there. Gossiping women are often wrong in their conjectures. On the other hand, sometimes they hit the truth.

Adelina had been occupying her little bedroom in the Golfanti suite of apartments for three weeks, becoming daily more attached to her Uncle Luigi and more familiar, in an elder sister way, with Pietro, when one day a letter came that sent a thrill

through her the nature of which she could not define positively either as pleasure or dismay. If she had analyzed the feeling closely she might have come to the conclusion that it was a mixture of both. The envelope was postmarked "New York," and the name of a hotel in the neighborhood of Madison Square was printed in the upper left-hand corner.

She was alone when the missive came. It happened to be a morning when both Luigi and Pietro had been obliged to go out early to give lessons, and she was about to sit down to the piano for practice. There were only a few lines. They read:

"Dear Adelina—I have come to New York, to attend lectures in the hospitals, and intend to remain some time. When may I call to see you and your friends, Signor Golfanti and his son? May I come to-morrow (Thursday)? I trust you are all well. I am at a hospital not far from your address from eleven to three every day.

"Hastily, but sincerely,

"JOHN RAYMOND."

That was all. Adelina thought he might have written more, even if he was in haste. It would not have taken many minutes to add a few lines which would show that he was something more to her than a mere acquaintance. It was all very well for her to write to him in an offhand way. She was a girl, and he could not expect her to be ef-

fusive, especially on paper, in black and white. She did not know that she ever would say "Yes" to the important question he had put to her three times, but she liked him. They had been playmates as children, and she had accustomed herself to lean on him in later years. That was proof that he was more to her than other young men, and he should have recognized it by sending a longer—and warmer—letter. As for his being in New York, that was not so much of a surprise. He had always said he meant to go there at some time or other. Of course, it gave her a little shock to be told that he was here now, but she would have felt that if he had come at any other time without warning. When you think a person is hundreds of miles away, you are sure to experience some slight agitation if you learn suddenly that he is only just around the corner. That was one of John's offences. She was inclined to be angry with him for not having let her know that he was about to leave Azalia. It was inconsiderate, to say the least.

When Luigi and Pietro came in from their lessons, within a few minutes of each other, half an hour later, they found Adelina at the piano, singing industriously, with the open letter by the side of her music-book in front of her. She stopped singing as Luigi entered and held out the letter to him.

"What is it, Adelina?" he asked.

"From Mr. Raymond. He is in New York, and wants to come and see you and Pietro."

Luigi read the letter deliberately.

"So? He want to see me and Pietro, eh? He not want to see you, of course," said Luigi, with a quizzical laugh. "Anyhow, he nice fellow, and I glad to see him. Pietro want to see him, too. Eh, Pietro?"

But Pietro went to his studio, shutting the door with a bang.

"What shall I tell him, Uncle? He says he would like to see us to-morrow?" asked Adelina, looking at the letter.

"Tell him it will give us all pleasure to see him. We all be home to-morrow. Buono! Let him come to breakfast."

"Breakfast, Uncle?" cried Adelina, incredulously.

"Yes. You see he says he at the hospital from eleven to three. Well, he not be able to come for luncheon, and he not want to wait till evening."

"Perhaps he does."

"No, no, no, Adelina. I see him looking at you when I in Azalia, and I know. He not wait any longer than he can help. We have him here for breakfast—at nine, eh?"

"I should never have thought of inviting him at that time."

"Then my thoughts are better than yours, eh? Now you write him nice note. Say he come for breakfast at nine in the morning. You put him in envelope—the letter, I mean—and I take him to his hotel and leave it for him myself."

Luigi Golfanti's pronouns were inclined to become confused under the influence of excitement, but the girl understood him.

"Oh, Uncle Luigi, you must not take that trouble."

"Si. I take him. You write the note. It would not get there in time through the mail, maybe."

Adelina did as she was told. She wrote that they all wanted to see him, and that he must come to breakfast with them the next morning, so that his visit would not interfere with his engagements at the hospital. They would expect him at nine.

"Where has father gone, Adelina?" asked Pietro, coming from the studio as he heard the outer door of the large room close.

"To Madison Square, with a letter. Mr. Raymond will be with us for breakfast to-morrow morning."

"Will he? Are you glad he's coming?"

"Why, of course. Aren't you?"

"Yes. I'm delighted," replied Pietro, shortly.

Then he marched to the piano and played thunderously, while Adelina, appearing not to notice the noise, went, with a thoughtful face, about her preparations for luncheon.

## CHAPTER XIV

"Then give me leave to read philosophy,
And, while I pause, serve in your harmony."

John Raymond was out when Luigi Golfanti delivered Adelina's letter at the hotel, so there could be no immediate answer to the invitation. But Adelina never doubted that their expected guest would arrive in time for breakfast the next day. So sure was she that he would be there at nine o'clock, that she made the coffee, timed to be ready to pour on the stroke of the hour, had the hot rolls in the little tin oven belonging to the oil-stove, and put the eggs handy in a saucer, waiting to be dropped into the boiling water in the sauce-pan over one of the burners. The breakfast equipage, always neat and clean under her care, was even more inviting than usual, if that could be possible. In a glass vase in the centre of the table was a cluster of fresh pansies. She had ordered them at the florist's the day before, and had been for them that morning.

Pietro had just entered the room from his studio, and, seated on the piano-stool, he watched

her arranging them with a deft, light, caressing touch, such as only a woman can give to flowers.

"How do you like the pansies, Pietro?" she asked.

"Why didn't you get roses?" was his response. "American Beauties are what I like."

He looked at her languishingly.

"Don't be silly, Pietro," she said, as, glancing at the clock, she saw that it was ten minutes of nine. "What's Uncle doing?"

"Shaving," replied Pietro. Then: "Am I silly because I call you an American beauty? That's what you are. It isn't my fault."

He turned to the piano and played part of his "Fragment," which he had told her in his letter to Azalia was to be called "The Song of a Soul." Suddenly, he asked, without looking away from the keyboard:

"What time is this Doctor What's-his-name coming?"

"Doctor 'What's-his-name' is not his name, Pietro," she replied, reprovingly, as she poured some milk from its bottle into a pitcher.

Pietro tossed his head impatiently and made a lightning run in arpeggios with his right hand, while he banged out his ill-humor in fierce heavy chords with the other.

"Well, what time is Doctor John Raymond to honor us with his company?"

Adelina ignored the slow, sneering emphasis with which Pietro had uttered John Raymond's name, and returned:

"About nine."

"I don't like him," snapped Pietro.

"You hardly know him. You only saw him two or three times when you made that short visit to my father in Azalia."

"I saw enough of him to know I didn't care for him, and I wish you didn't. Why couldn't he stay in Ohio, where he belongs?"

"Why didn't I?" laughed Adelina.

She was different, he told her, moodily, striking the piano keys in chords, triplets and little chromatic runs up and down. He was trying to control himself so that he could meet John Raymond with some pretence of cordiality. In five minutes this "interloper," as Pietro mentally styled him, would arrive.

"I don't see that there is much difference," she said, raising the lid of the coffee-pot and looking into it solicitously. "I came to New York to study singing. Doctor Raymond came to improve himself in his profession. The only distinction is that

I give my time to music, while he goes to the hospital, hoping to become an abler physician."

Pietro flung himself from the piano-stool impatiently.

"Bah! He came to New York because you are here."

"Well, wouldn't you do the same thing?" she rejoined. "Wouldn't you, Pietro?"

But Pietro had no opportunity to reply just then, even if he had intended to do so, for Luigi came surging in from his bedroom, not only shaved, but with his gray hair arranged in the killing fashion in which he had worn it in the days when he played Manrico, Faust and Lohengrin to the Leonora, Margherita and Elsa of Adelina's mother. He did not often trouble himself about the set of his hair, but he felt that this was a special occasion to which he must pay due honor.

"Here I am, Adelina. What's the time?"

Their apartment bell, communicating with the push-button on the door-post in the street, rang loudly.

"It's exactly nine o'clock," answered Adelina, gaily, "and here is Doctor Raymond. Who's going to let him in?"

But Luigi Golfanti was already on his way down stairs. Pietro retreated to his studio. He

didn't believe he could bear being present when Adelina and John Raymond met.

Adelina stood, alone, by the little oil-stove, looking with unseeing eyes toward the door, while her hands closed and unclosed convulsively. All the careless laughter had left her face, which was pale and set, as she fought desperately with herself, that she might greet John Raymond with something of the old regard in her manner. She had seen him only a month before, but that month had meant so much to her, away from the narrow environment of Azalia. How could she feign to him that she was the same, when she knew so well that she was not? It was as if she had escaped from a prison, and was expected to show pleasure when one of her old keepers came to recapture her.

Too well Adelina knew that John Raymond would not approve of her present mode of life, innocent as it was. He never had been in sympathy with her in what she strove for—the possession of a highly trained voice, that would render her independent, not only of Azalia, but of every other place. How, then, could she expect him to look with favor on this semi-Bohemian existence of hers? No matter what she may have said to him, he believed that eventually she would be his wife, and

he would have liked to order her life in his own way, with that idea ever in view.

"But he shan't do it. Of that I am determined," said Adelina to herself, with a petulant stamp.

It was at this propitious moment that the door burst open, and in came Luigi, dragging John Raymond forward, embarrassed and smiling.

"There she is, Doctor!" shouted Luigi, joyously. "Adelina, allow me to present Signor Doctor Raymond."

The question of how she should receive him was settled on the instant. All her doubts and misgivings vanished when she saw his eager, beseeching face, as he almost ran to her, took her hand, and whispered, tremblingly:

"Adelina!"

"Jack!"

He would have taken her in his arms then, if ever he had done it before. But there never had been any warmer demonstration between them than a hand-clasp, and it was that which had to content him then. But, she had called him "Jack." It was seldom that she had used that intimate appellation since they were children together, and for some months before she had left Azalia it had been "John" invariably. Now, in the joy of seeing him

—a joy which was so much greater than she had expected to feel—it seemed as if only "Jack" could come to her lips. All the internal conflict she had passed through while Luigi had gone down to answer the bell was wasted energy. John Raymond was more than "John" to her now. He was "Jack."

Did he comprehend anything of what was in her mind as she repeated, involuntarily, "Jack," while a far-away, dreamy look stole into her gray-blue eyes? Perhaps he did. He firmly believed it possible to read the thoughts of another by a determined concentration of will, and he was very, very earnest in his desire to know what she was thinking about as he held her hand and heard her call him by the old boy-and-girl name.

It was only for a few seconds that they stood facing each other, hand holding hand, but it was long enough for Pietro to see them thus, as he came reluctantly from the studio, to speak to the man whose regard Adelina took seriously, whether she looked on him as a lover or not.

"Here, Pietro! Here's Doctor Raymond!" cried Luigi, heartily, oblivious of his son's angry confusion.

"How do you do, Doctor?" said Pietro.

John Raymond was too happy to notice the coldness, almost rudeness, of Pietro's manner, and

seizing his hand in a warm grasp, he responded, cordially:

"How are you, Pietro? I am very pleased to see you again."

Adelina was already at the oil-stove, and as she put four eggs into the boiling water, she called out to Luigi to see that Doctor Raymond had a chair at the table, and to sit down himself, while she poured the coffee.

"All right, Adelina. Pietro, get the piano-stool for yourself. We have only three chairs, Doctor, so we have to use the stool when we have company. But Pietro is used to it. He not often anywhere else, except on the stool—eh, Pietro?"

Pietro nodded, and as he brought the piano-stool, John and Luigi took their places at the table. Then Adelina, in a pleasant flutter of responsibility, which John Raymond thought became her exceedingly, poured the coffee, keeping an anxious eye on the egg saucepan meanwhile.

"I cannot cook more than four eggs at a time," she said. "The saucepan is so small. But I'll put on four more when these are done, and we shall manage somehow."

The breakfast was a success. How could it be otherwise, with Adelina presiding? That's what Raymond thought, and so did Pietro, the latter

looking as if he regarded it as presumption on the Doctor's part to compliment her—as he did several times in the course of the meal.

"Well, Jack, and how's everyone in Azalia?" asked Adelina, when she found time, amid her duties as hostess, to talk about something besides the breakfast.

"She calls him 'Jack.' I'd like to know why," was Pietro's mental observation, as he scowled into his coffee-cup.

"Everybody was well when I left," answered Raymond, who also had not failed to notice that she continued to call him "Jack." "Hundreds of people sent their regards to you. Mr. Treadhouse asked particularly to be remembered."

"Isn't that the preacher at the church?" put in Luigi.

"Yes, the Reverend Thomas Treadhouse. You recollect him, don't you?"

"Si. He preached fine sermon—morning and evening, too."

"Poor Tommy Tittlemouse," said Adelina, smiling: "More coffee, Jack?"

"No, thank you," answered Raymond. "'Tommy Tittlemouse' is Adelina's name for him, Signor," he explained, turning to Luigi. "But he really is a fine man, and Adelina thinks so, too."

"Of course I do," she assented. "But what a pity he has no sense of humor. I think that's why his folks thought he'd make a good preacher."

"It was a mistake if that was their idea," declared Raymond, rather warmly. "I never knew a really good preacher who did not possess a very acute appreciation of humor. To be otherwise would imply a lack of understanding, and certainly that cannot be charged against the average minister, whatever his denomination."

"Well, don't be angry, Jack. I was speaking of this one case only—not in general, and you must confess that Tommy Tittlemouse is an overpoweringly solemn individual."

"I know you used to quiz him shamefully when you were at the 'don't care' age—about fourteen or fifteen," laughed Raymond.

"What did you do to him, Adelina?" inquired Luigi, with an anticipatory grin.

Adelina's merry laugh as a remembrance of past fun came up in her memory, rang musically through the room, and Pietro didn't know why it made him unhappy.

"Well, for instance, Uncle," said Adelina, "I tried him once on that old conundrum, 'Why is a tin can tied to a dog's tail like death?' "

"Yes, I've heard it," interjected Raymond.

"Tommy hadn't," giggled Adelina. "He thought for a moment—at least, I suppose he was thinking—and then he asked, sepulchrally, 'Why is it? I don't see any connection between a dog's tail, with or without a tin can, and our mortal end.' I told him the answer was 'Because it is bound to occur.'"

"Eh?" interrupted Luigi, bewildered. "How is that? Occur? Occur? Oh, I see now—a cur. Ha, ha, ha! Very good. Go on, Adelina."

"Tommy did not speak for nearly a minute. At last he said, still in that voice from the tombs with which he always tries to force home a moral or theological truth, 'Quite right, my child. Death *is* bound to occur.' He had taken it all seriously, without any idea that there was a catch in it. Of course, I giggled—I was only about thirteen—and next Sunday he preached a sermon on the sin of frivolity applied to sacred things, aimed directly at me, as I sat in a front pew."

"That dog of his has a sense of humor," remarked Raymond, with a dry smile.

"Oh, yes, Uncle," went on Adelina. "I must tell you about Tommy's dog. He is a ferocious animal to strangers—a bull-terrier. Jack believed he could tame him by—What is the name of that

curious power Professor Cooper lectured on that night in the Town Hall, Jack?"

"Mental suggestion."

"Yes. That's it. I'd forgotten. Mental suggestion. Well, Jack applied it to the bull-terrier, and when Jack had him thoroughly tamed——"

Adelina stopped and looked mischievously at John Raymond.

"Si? What then?" queried Luigi, deeply interested.

"The dog bit him."

A storm of laughter arose at this unexpected result of the experiment. As it died down, John Raymond said, gravely:

"Yes, that was the way it worked with the bull-terrier, but nevertheless it is a science that the world finds it must reckon with. Already it plays its part in medicine, and that part will extend as it is better understood. You remember that I have cured your headaches several times merely by placing my hands on your forehead, Adelina?"

"I thought that was magnetism. I know you have used that word when you were applying the treatment."

"Yes, but it was not that alone. Animal magnetism is potential in such cases, but I am con-

vinced that mental suggestion—meaning that I *willed* the pain away from your head—was the principal agent in curing you."

Pietro muttered something under his breath which might have been "Bosh!" But nobody heard it, so that it didn't matter.

"Well, I don't get headaches now," declared Adelina. "The air of New York seems to agree with me."

"Better than that of Azalia?" asked Raymond.

"I don't have headaches here, and I did there," she answered, lightly.

"You don't want to go back, then?"

"Yes, I do," was her quick reply. "I *do* want to go back, to sing in the Town Hall, and show those dear ladies of the Sewing Circle, as well as a few others like them, that I didn't come to New York for nothing."

"Her voice have much improved," said Luigi. "I hope one day it will be equal to her mother's. But she must practice a lot, every day, for many months, and then—"

The good-natured Italian put his right forefinger to the side of his nose, as he often did when his mind was busy, and John Raymond wished he had finished the sentence.

Breakfast was over by this time, and Adelina,

saying she must dust and tidy up the studio, because some of Pietro's pupils would soon be coming, tripped away, playfully kissing her hand to all three as she disappeared.

"I'll help you, Adelina," Pietro called after her, and followed her into the studio.

As the door closed, Luigi lighted a cigarette thoughtfully, after offering the cigarette-box to Raymond, who declined it. Luigi walked up and down the room twice. Then he stopped by the open fireplace, in front of the young man, who was sitting with his back to the table on which the breakfast things still remained.

"Doctor, I want Adelina to sing for you," said Luigi, blowing two thin columns of blue smoke from his nostrils.

"I should like to hear her sing."

"I want you to hear how much the voice it have improved, even in this short time. When I hear it in Azalia it was good. I see its promise. But I want then to have the privilege of training it. Now I have for it great hopes."

"You speak of her voice as 'it,' as though it were a thing apart from her," observed Raymond, jealously.

Luigi walked over to the piano and took his seat on the stool, which Pietro had returned to its

place, and there was the ring of the artist in his tones, as he said, impressively:

"A voice, to a teacher, is an instrument—a violin. So! The breath is the bow—the active power in the music. The larynx is the keyboard. You comprehend?"

Raymond nodded.

"But that is not all," went on Luigi. "There must be a soul behind the voice, and that is the artist—the singer. When Adelina sing, you will hear."

"I have heard."

"Yes, but not since I have been her teacher," replied Luigi, with a touch of pride. "However, I have a particular reason for asking you to hear her now. I am not quite satisfied. I fear—"

"You think she may not become a great singer, after all?"

Do what he would, John Raymond could not help saying this hopefully, as if it would please him should Adelina fail to realize all that her teacher desired for her.

"I not know—yet," answered Luigi. "But, you are a doctor. When she sing, I wish you to note something that— You know music?"

"I have some knowledge of it. I studied violin with Adelina's father years ago."

"Ah! Then you will know. When the voice reach the middle register there is a slight loss of evenness. The tone do not balance. I like to know if it is—what you call?—organic."

Luigi walked to the window and looked out on the sunlit street, where a huckster was bellowing his wares, as his wagon rumbled over the cobblestones, while a canary at an open parlor window opposite—where Rubinstein, the tailor, Anton's father, sat cross-legged on a table, plying his trade—tried to drown all other sounds with his shrill bird-song.

John Raymond smiled grimly. What the honest Italian music teacher had just said pleased him.

## CHAPTER XV

"The dim, yet tearless eyes, that speak
The misery of the breaking heart."

Luigi Golfanti was impatient for John Raymond's professional opinion, as a medical man, on Adelina's voice, and, bringing his reverie at the window abruptly to an end, he went to the studio door and called the girl. There was the sound of a scuffle inside, and then she came out, laughing.

"I beg your pardon for leaving you, Jack," she said. "But I could not let Pietro's studio remain in such a disgraceful condition when he is expecting a pupil. So I had to do some housecleaning in a modest way. And how do you suppose he repays me for my care of his room? You never would guess, I am sure?"

"How?" asked Raymond, seeing that he was expected to say something.

"Why, by making love to me. Desperate love, too. I stopped his burning protestations with the dust-cloth and threatened him with the broom. If I hadn't, I'm afraid he would have dragged me away to his waiting steed like young Lochinvar,

and poor Uncle Luigi would have been left to take care of himself. Pietro would have had to get the steed from Murphy's livery-stable, of course, but that wouldn't have troubled him. He is the most violent suitor I ever had."

John Raymond did not like all this, and his face showed it, while Pietro, following Adelina sheepishly from the studio, went straight to the piano and began to play improvisations, to hide his confusion.

"Doctor Raymond wants you to sing, Adelina. Pietro will play the accompaniment," said Luigi, in a businesslike tone.

"Do you, Jack?"

"Yes. I have not heard you sing since you were in Azalia," he answered, "and naturally I am anxious to hear how you have improved."

While he was speaking she had gone to the piano and selected an "Even Song," which she placed before Pietro. As the accompanist played the prelude, John Raymond looked at the young girl with a longing to take her away and keep her all to himself which might have been apparent to the jealous eyes of Pietro had they not been fixed on the music. Luigi did not see it, of course. His attention was concentrated in his pupil, and he saw nothing but her as she began the song.

It was a tuneful vesper hymn, beginning softly and in simple cadence, but rising toward the end in a joyful swell of melody which gave full opportunity for ambitious vocalism. Adelina sang it with ease, while Raymond listened critically, endeavoring to discover the trifling defect about which Luigi had spoken. Whether he found the shortcoming or not he did not say at once, for Adelina turned to him as she finished, obviously hoping that she had pleased him. So he told her how much he had enjoyed the song, and said he would like to wait for another, but that he had only just time to reach the hospital by eleven o'clock.

Luigi Golfanti went down to the front door with him, determined to know what the doctor's opinion was.

"It may be as you say, Signor Golfanti," was John Raymond's reply to a direct question. "I do not think I should have noticed it if you had not mentioned it to me beforehand. As it was, I thought I detected a slight roughness of tone in the middle register, which may be the result of some abnormality in the larynx. If that is the case, probably it can be cured by a trifling operation."

"An operation?" repeated Luigi, in dismay. "I don't like the idea of operating on her throat. The organs of vocalism are very delicate. Suppose the

doctor his knife slip when he operating, and he cut her so bad she not sing at all any more?"

John Raymond smiled reassuringly, as he said there would be no danger of that kind, that most likely the surgeon would not use a knife at all, and that, if he did, it would be more like a needle than a knife, and too small to do any harm. He added that surgeons were careful, and very seldom made slips. Luigi had pictured an implement like a butcher-knife going down Adelina's throat, and he was much relieved that his idea had been all wrong. He was silent for a few moments, standing at the top of the steps and looking musingly down the street.

"Could you perform the operation, Doctor Raymond?" he asked, at last, with an effort, as if he dreaded an affirmative answer.

"I should hardly like to undertake it. I think it would be better to entrust it to a throat specialist. I have a friend, Doctor King, who has had wide experience in that line of practice and is a very able surgeon. I think I can say that, for me, he would do it free of charge."

Luigi Golfanti brightened up at this, and Raymond knew that the question of expense had been troubling him. Luigi thanked Raymond again and again.

"When do you think the operation could be done?" he asked.

"Are you sure Adelina would consent to it?"

"She do anything I say," was Luigi's confident reply. "She know I would not tell her if it was not for her good."

Yes, that was true. John Raymond confessed it to himself. This comparative stranger—this theatrical Italian—had only to suggest, and she would obey. His own hold on her had slipped away. There were others in whom she trusted now as she used to rely on him. She was no longer the gentle, obedient Adelina, with unbounded faith in his judgment, who had been led by him in the past. He was losing her, and it was all on account of this singing, which was drawing her toward the footlights—to a life in which he would not, and could not, have any part. He was jealous of her and the career on the threshold of which she stood, and the pain of it, which had become so drearily familiar to him, shot again through his heart, and he groaned. But Luigi Golfanti was waiting for him to speak, and he shook himself into action.

"I shall see Doctor King to-day, Signor," he said, calmly, "and I will speak to him about the operation. If you like, I will come this evening and tell you what he says."

Luigi thanked him again, with what Raymond looked on as uncalled-for effusiveness, forgetting that the Italian knew nothing of what had been passing in his mind.

"Oh, Doctor, one thing more," called out Luigi.

Raymond had reached the bottom of the steps and was about to walk rapidly away toward the hospital. He had stopped so long talking at the door that he was afraid he would be late.

"Yes?"

"There's a woman in this house, Mrs. Vittorio, who is sick, and too poor to pay a doctor. She live two flights above us."

"All right. I'll run up and see her this evening," promised John Raymond. Then he hurried off.

There was plenty of charity in John Raymond's composition—but not toward the stage. It was as well that Luigi had not told him Mrs. Vittorio was an actress.

Raymond reached the hospital in time, after all. He made his round of the wards, taking notes as he went, witnessed an operation for appendicitis, assisted in the amputation of a leg in an emergency case brought by the ambulance—an ironworker who had fallen a few floors from a new skyscraper —and was present at the deathbed of a tuberculosis

patient. It was all very interesting, from a professional point of view, and he ought not to have been thinking of anything outside. But he was. The face of Adelina Von Hagen peeped at him among those of the students listening to the lecture at the appendicitis clinic; he saw her hovering about the poor fellow whose leg was cut off, and she accompanied him to the bedside of the consumptive who gave up the struggle behind one of the screens that afford merciful privacy to death in a big hospital ward. The clinic, operations and death were all part of the daily routine of the hospital, and they did not affect John Raymond as they would a stranger to such scenes. So, when his vagrant thoughts followed Adelina and brought her to him, he was able to give her as much attention as he allowed to his studies. Perhaps he gave her more.

Doctor King was a tall, lean man, who had been graduated so long ago that he had little patience with the pranks of medical students, and was in the habit of saying that young men had no business in the profession. Regarded as one of the best authorities on the treatment of throat ailments in New York, he was on the staff of the hospital specially to attend to such cases, grudgingly giving an hour or so from his private practice, and threatening every week not to come any more. It

chanced, however, that he had met John Raymond some years before in a Columbus hospital, when the young man's strong common sense had impressed him favorably. Now that they had come together again in New York, Raymond was delighted to find that the eminent specialist, whom most doctors held in such awe, even to the point of not daring to address him, behaved to him almost with cordiality.

"Doctor King," said Raymond, on this day, "I have a case of laryngeal trouble that I should like you to look at in your office, if you will."

"Who is the patient?"

"A young lady—a friend of mine, from Azalia, Ohio, my home."

"I see! What's the matter with her?"

"She sings, and—"

"Strained her vocal cords, and expects me to make her a new set, I suppose," interrupted Doctor King, gruffly. "I don't see why people can't have singing voices and brains at the same time. I'll look at the throat, however—for you, Raymond. Understand that. It is strictly for you."

"When will it be convenient?" asked Raymond, meekly.

"Let me see," grunted Doctor King, taking out a red-covered engagement-book and studying it.

"This is Tuesday. Bring the throat to me on Thursday, at three o'clock. Good afternoon."

They had been standing in the hospital lobby, near the front door. Doctor King bolted out of doors and into a waiting motor-car. He was gone before John Raymond could say anything more.

"Queer old codger," was the young man's inward estimate of the great specialist, "but I would not trust Adelina to anyone else."

Raymond went to his hotel in a brown study, and he had hardly emerged from his sombre reflections when he presented himself in the evening at the Golfanti apartment, to be welcomed by Adelina and Luigi with a warmth that counteracted the chill exhaled by Pietro.

"I glad you come, Doctor," said Luigi. "Adelina will sing for you again, and perhaps you go up and see Mrs. Vittorio."

"Is she very ill?" asked Raymond. "What is her ailment, do you think?"

"She lost her husband recently, Uncle says, and I think her heart's breaking," explained Adelina.

"And she has hard work to get along, too," added Luigi.

"I'll go up and see her before I go home," said Raymond.

"I have to go to a pupil this evening," an-

nounced Pietro, abruptly, and he went out, without anyone taking particular heed of him—as he observed with fierce indignation.

"I not know what come over that boy to-day," remarked Luigi, as the door banged. "He been disagreeable ever since he got up this morning."

Perhaps Adelina could have guessed the cause of it, but if she did she kept it to herself.

"I go up and see Mrs. Vittorio. I tell her you coming, eh, Doctor?" suggested Luigi.

"Very well."

Luigi left the room, and Raymond did not fail to notice that he took with him a basket which contained fruit, and that there was a bottle of wine hidden under his threadbare coat. It was easy to surmise that Mrs. Vittorio needed something more sustaining than medical advice.

Adelina seated herself at the piano and began to run over the accompaniment of the "Even Song" she had sung in the morning, humming the melody at the same time. Somehow, she felt embarrassed, although she hardly could have told why. It may have been because John Raymond was looking at her fixedly and sadly. Without turning her face directly toward him, she was sensible of his gaze, and she wished he would say something. He broke the silence suddenly.

"Addie."

"Yes, Jack?"

"You know that I love you?"

She shrugged her shoulders wearily.

"You have told me so two or three times. I hope you don't intend to make another formal announcement of the interesting fact now."

Careless—perhaps heartless—as were the words, she could feel that her cheeks were burning, and it made her angry. She kept on playing.

"I am not going to annoy you by telling you again, Addie," he replied—and there was pitiful hurt in his unsteady accents. "I am only reminding you of what you know."

"As a preamble to something unpleasant. It has always been your way to assure me of your strong regard before beginning a lecture. Well, go on. If you are wound up to give me a scolding, don't keep me in suspense. I want to hear the worst."

Although she spoke jestingly, there was an undercurrent of bitterness which gave a harsh ring to her voice. Raymond detected it, and he was tempted for an instant to keep silent as he looked at her fair young face, so distressed, despite the defiant smile that curled her lip and sparkled at the back of her blue-gray eyes. But the brown study

into which he had plunged as he left the hospital, and which continued for so long, had resulted in a determination to say what he believed to be right, and he nerved himself to keep steadily along the road blazed for him by his conscience.

"I was only going to remark," he said, "that I love you too much to see you in this false position."

"What do you mean?"

"In the first place, this old man, Luigi Golfanti, is not your uncle."

"He is my mother's cousin. He was her friend —her true friend."

"Perhaps so, but is it not perilous to your good name to be living here, in these apartments, with two single men? Would you dare do it if you were in Azalia?"

She made a gesture which expressed unmistakably her contempt for the opinion of Azalia.

John Raymond saw it, and it only made him more determined to save her, if he could.

"The whole thing is wrong, dear," he went on. "You are blinded to your danger. See, Addie, I did not mean to repeat what you seem not to want to hear, but I can't help it. I love you, Addie, and if heaven had not gifted you with this voice that has taken you from your home and brought you

into a free-and-easy atmosphere that distorts your view, I believe I could have made you love me."

He had taken her left hand as it lay idle on the keys of the piano—much as he had captured it on the gate that moonlit evening in Azalia which seemed so far, far away in the past.

Without withdrawing her hand, she stood up and faced him.

"Jack, I know you have the best intentions in the world. But—you don't understand. That's all."

"I'm afraid I do understand—too well," he answered, miserably.

There was silence while the clock ticked perhaps a dozen times. Then she asked, quietly:

"If you saw a friend of yours hammering his head against a stone wall, what would you do?"

"I'd try to make him stop, I suppose."

"Then tell me how to make you stop hurting yourself through me. My mind is made up. The humdrum of married life would be impossible to me. Fate has taken me by the hand, more firmly than you are holding it now, and I could not go any other way, if I would."

He dropped her hand and walked to the other end of the room, but returned immediately afterward, as if a new thought had come to him.

"If," he said, in a tone which had a strange note of hopefulness, "your voice should not prove so great as you expect? Or if you should lose it altogether?"

"I can't suppose anything so dreadful and—so unlikely."

"But, if you *should* lose it?" he persisted. "Would you, in that case, marry me?"

The pitying smile that had been on her face more than once since they had been talking overspread it again, as she said: "What is the use of my answering that absurd question?"

"Answer it, to please me, won't you? I am like a drowning man clinging to a straw."

"Nonsense! There are plenty of other girls in the world."

"Won't you answer?"

"Of course I will. If I should lose my voice, and there's no one else I like better than you, I'll —think about it."

He had no chance to say whether this satisfied him or not, for the door opened and Luigi blew gustily into the room, and his wholesome good-humor temporarily wafted away all morbid perplexities.

"I'm ready to go up to see Mrs. Vittorio," said Raymond.

"She is asleep, and she have another woman with her," said Luigi. "Besides, she is much better, and I don't think you will have to trouble about her, though I appreciate your kindness just the same."

John Raymond thought of the basket of fruit and bottle of wine, and he guessed why she might not need him. A kindly, charitable neighbor could do her more good than a professional physician.

## CHAPTER XVI

"Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto, to have set quite free
His half-regained Eurydice."

It was a pleasant evening that John Raymond spent in the Golfanti apartments. He was almost happy under the influence of Adelina's singing and Luigi's cheerful temper. Pietro came back in a little more than an hour, and played Adelina's accompaniments. While he was absent she accompanied herself. But she said she preferred to stand up to sing, so that she could send her voice forth freely.

"I feel as if I were singing before an audience when I stand," she explained, "and it inspires me to my best efforts."

John Raymond wished she had some other reason.

"And your chest is not cramped when you stand, either," remarked Luigi. "The audience is nothing."

"You do not feel any discomfort in your throat

while singing, do you?" asked Raymond, in the dispassionate tones of a physician.

"No. But sometimes it seems as if I lose control of the melody for an instant when I strike a certain note. It is probably only a fancy. I doubt whether anyone can notice it except Uncle Luigi. He tries to prevent my becoming vain by telling me that my middle register is uneven."

"Doctor King, the famous throat specialist, wants to see you on Thursday afternoon," was John Raymond's response to this.

She looked with startled eyes from him to Luigi, and back again.

"Is it as bad as that, do you think?"

"No, it is nothing, Adelina," Luigi hastened to assure her. "Only, such a voice as yours must be taken care of. It is so with all the great singers of the opera. They have their own doctors always with them, who spray, and spray, and spray their throats every day. It is part of the business of being a singer. But it not show there is anything wrong. It only to keep the throat in good condition."

Perhaps Luigi realized that he had protested too much when Adelina got up from the piano-stool without replying, and went to her own room,

closing the door after her. Pietro had not yet come home.

"I a fool. That what I am!" declared Luigi, ruefully. "She go now and wear out her eyes trying to see down her throat in the mirror. I hope Doctor King he not find anything serious, or it will give her much misery."

"She will go to see him, of course?"

"Si. She good girl. I tell her she go to Doctor King. That all will be necessary. She go. You will see."

Pietro entered at this juncture, and, with a nod apiece to Raymond and his father, sat down to the piano.

"Pietro, Adelina go to the doctor on Thursday afternoon," said Luigi.

"What doctor?" demanded Pietro, fiercely, swinging around from the piano. "Ray——"

"Doctor King. He look at her throat."

"Oh!"

"He the great doctor for the voice. You know him, Pietro?"

"I've heard of him. I'm glad he will examine Adelina's throat, just to satisfy her and you. I have never noticed anything the matter with it, myself."

"Pietro, you are a pianist—not a vocal instruc-

tor. Remember that," his father rejoined, with dignity. "You not supposed to know all the delicate membranes of the human organ. It enough for you to tell when the piano out of tune."

"Humph!" grunted Pietro. "I don't believe there is anything wrong with her throat—not much, anyhow."

Adelina had just come into the big room from her bedroom, and she overheard Pietro's remark.

"I think Pietro is right," she said. "I have looked into my mouth at the mirror, with the lamp so close I was afraid it would singe my eyebrows, and I cannot see anything. Still, I should like to have Doctor King's opinion. I am glad it is to be soon—only the day after to-morrow."

"Let us hear you sing, Adelina," said Pietro. "If we all listen hard, we might find that uneven note. If it is there, I don't see how it can get away from us. It is like a 'wolf' in a piano."

"What is a 'wolf?'" asked Raymond. "I mean, the kind you refer to."

"It is when a tuner does not get one or two of the keys up to the right pitch, so that it throws out all the others," explained Luigi. "Tuners call it a 'wolf,' because they have to chase it up and down the whole keyboard sometimes before they can catch it. They know it's there, but it is hard to

get hold of it. Pietro thinks it is the same with the uneven tone in Adelina's voice. But a voice and piano are two different instruments, as I told him just now."

"Stop quarreling, you two, and listen to something I have to tell you—something I have decided to do, very important," broke in Adelina, suddenly, with a rippling laugh.

"What is it?" asked Raymond.

"Some mischief. I see it in her face and hear it in her laugh," declared Luigi, shaking his forefinger at her.

"No, it isn't mischief. It is a respectable, conventional thing I mean to do," she insisted.

"Well, what is it?"

"I am going to be married."

"Married? Who to?" roared Pietro.

John Raymond looked at her half in apprehension, half in hope, and Luigi shook his head as if to reprove her for saying such a thing. He said, sternly:

"Oh, that is foolish, Adelina. I don't believe it. You should not say that. You young girl, and must be careful how you talk. It is not true, of course, or you would have told me."

"Confound his insolence!" thought Raymond.

"What right has he to think she makes him her confidant in everything?"

"Let me tell you how it is," continued Adelina, demurely. "Doctor Raymond has been lecturing me for living here with only Uncle Luigi and Pietro—"

"Why, what—" spluttered Luigi, indignantly, while Pietro favored John Raymond with a blacker frown than usual.

"Don't interrupt," she commanded. "The head and front of my offending seems to be that I am a single young woman, living in the same apartments as two single men. If I were married it would be strictly proper. That is the inference. You can all see that. Besides, I have two lovers, each of whom thinks he has the exclusive right to me."

"Adelina!" expostulated Raymond.

"Now, I cannot marry both of them, so—"

Pietro was leaning forward eagerly.

"I won't take either."

"Then who is to be the happy man?" inquired Luigi, banteringly.

She ran to Luigi, and placing her two hands on his shoulders, as he sat with his back to the table, cried, merrily:

"You."

Luigi gasped.

"Me?"

"Yes. Don't you see what a splendid arrangement it will be? I shall be Signora Golfanti, and therefore in my proper place as mistress of your home, and so I shall not have to lose my teacher. You can give me my lessons just as you are doing now, and I will take care of my little stepson, Pietro."

Pietro did not know whether to laugh or be angry that she should refer to him, even in fun, as if he were a boy, instead of the important man he considered himself. As for John Raymond, he entirely disapproved of levity in connection with so serious a thing as matrimony, and he fidgeted uneasily in his chair as Adelina kept her hands on Luigi's shoulders and pretended she was about to kiss him.

"Adelina," protested Luigi, "you make joke of things you should not. When the time come for you to be married, there plenty of young men fight for you. At the present you must study and sing. We have Doctor King make your voice better on Thursday, and then you sing as I want. So! But marry—no."

She turned from him with a laughing toss of

her head, and told Pietro to play the accompaniment for the aria, "Youth's Appeal to Age."

"You have it there, on the piano, Pietro," she reminded him. "I was singing it yesterday. It will just fit the present situation."

"What you mean by the present situation, Adelina?" demanded Luigi, severely, as Pietro, having arranged his music, played a dramatic prelude.

"I'll show you. You can't escape."

She took up a melodramatic position in front of Luigi, stretched out her arms to him appealingly, and began to sing, with much florid ornamentation, in the way of trills, shakes and brilliant runs, the following words:

"From the depths of my trusting heart, I love you.
Do not spurn my young affection's plea.
If youth would bow to the wisdom of the sage,
Who on earth shall say it nay?"

As she reached this point, lingering on the last few words with a tremendous cadenza, she seized Luigi by the wrist and dragged him from his chair, as if about to embrace him.

He pulled himself away, saying, half angrily, half pleadingly:

"Don't be foolish, Adelina, but sing. I love to hear it." Then, to Raymond: "Is it not fine, Doctor? What can be wrong with that voice? The execution, it is perfect."

But Adelina was not done with Luigi. Placing her two hands over her heart in operatic fashion, and following him as he retreated to the back of the grand piano, she continued, in a series of high notes, clear and liquid as Tyrolean bells:

"I love you! Really! Dearly! Nearly!"

Here she caught him by the coat-tails, and, for the life of him, John Raymond could not help laughing at the absurdity of the performance, although he wished Adelina were not so familiar with Luigi. But she was at the height of another cadenza, and, carried away by the music and the opportunity to indulge in a little of the acting of which she was always dreaming, she took no notice of Raymond. The cadenza resolved itself into a mighty "Oh, say you love me!" with a high D-flat that made Luigi fairly shout with joy:

"Listen to that, Doctor! You hear that, Pietro? The tone! Ah! It was sublime!"

In his enthusiasm, Luigi threw his arms around the girl and kissed her on the cheek, to the disgust of John Raymond, while Pietro gave rein to his

jealousy, in his usual way, by taking it out of the piano.

"There, Jack. Uncle Luigi has accepted me, you see," cried Adelina, gleefully. "He embraced and kissed me. What more could he do to show that he means to make me Signora Golfanti?"

John Raymond could stand it no longer. Picking up his hat from the side table where Adelina had place it on his arrival, he said, abruptly, that he had an engagement, and must be going.

"You will be here on Thursday afternoon, to take Adelina to Doctor King's, eh?" Luigi reminded him, anxiously.

"Certainly, at half-past two o'clock. That will give us plenty of time to get to the doctor's office by three."

"Si. That's well. I go, too, to see Doctor King, with Adelina," answered Luigi.

Luigi did not go down stairs with John Raymond this time, and Adelina was looking the other way when he went out. It was perfectly clear that Raymond was displeased over something.

"Sometimes I think he—that Doctor Raymond —not care much about any of us," observed Luigi, reflectively, as he lighted a cigarette. "Eh, Adelina?"

Adelina did not seem to think it worth while

to express an opinion, but Pietro said, vindictively:

"He hates me. He likes Adelina, but he doesn't think she should be here with us. That's what's the matter with him."

"Si? Well, maybe Adelina not be with us long, when Signor Valeri, the impresario, he hear her sing. He make her prima donna just so sure he hear her. Mark that, Pietro."

"Unless Doctor King decides that I never shall be able to reach the high places of the profession. Doctors can tell, can't they, Uncle?"

Adelina tried to say this lightly, but there was a catch in her voice that perhaps meant fear—a nameless dread that came over her whenever she thought of the approaching examination of her throat. How could she know what the great specialist might find?

"Doctor King he say nothing of the kind," answered Luigi, hastily. "You practice your exercises, Adelina. I go read the paper."

He disposed himself comfortably, cigarette in mouth, with his back to the table, so that the light of the lamp would shine over his shoulder on the Italian newspaper he had taken up, and paid no attention either to Adelina or Pietro.

Those two young people took advantage of Signor Golfanti's abstraction to indulge in a low-

voiced quarrel, punctuated by chords on the piano, with Pietro doing all the talking, while the girl, singing her exercises without a break, continued so to exasperate him by various head-flingings, shoulder-shruggings, raising of eyebrows and scornful glances, that the unfortunate youth was as nearly out of his mind as a swain hopelessly in love could be without becoming actually unsafe to be at large.

After expressing various uncomplimentary opinions of Doctor Raymond and trying to make her say she did not care for that absent physician, Pietro at last angrily blurted out:

"You don't appreciate me, either as a man or musician, Adelina. I don't feel like sitting here by the hour, playing accompaniments for anyone who doesn't appreciate me."

Still singing, she took him by the shoulders and pushed him, to make him move. He got up from the stool in a huff, and she took his place at the piano without missing a note with her voice. This put the finishing touch to Pietro's indignation and resentment.

"Play your old exercises yourself," he snarled. "And the next time you want me to play them, ask me, that's all."

He marched away to his studio and slammed

"PLAY YOUR OLD EXERCISES YOURSELF."—*Page 248*

the door after him, making Luigi almost swallow his cigarette and causing him to jump up and shout after his son:

"What you bang the door so hard for, Pietro?"

But Pietro was too furious to answer, even if he heard. Adelina kept on with her exercises.

## CHAPTER XVII

"'How dost thou like this tune?'
'It gives a very echo to the seat
Where love is throned.'"

Angry and turbulent were John Raymond's thoughts as he went away from the Golfanti household after Adelina's lyrical love-making to Luigi. The performance had been extremely distasteful to him. He hated anything that suggested theatricalism, and she had been theatrical to a greater degree than he had supposed would be possible to her. It never had struck him so forcibly before that she was completely possessed by what is called the dramatic temperament. He admitted to himself, with a shudder, that she had gone through the impromptu *scena* with a convincing skill worthy of a cantatrice before the footlights. He knew something about it too, for, prejudiced as he was against the stage, he had held—until he learned of Adelina's ambition to become a prima donna—that the opera was somehow different from and better than all other stage entertainment. So he had once attended a presentation of "Rigoletto" in Cincinnati,

and he remembered what it had all been like. Of course, Adelina had heard, through her father and Luigi, of her mother's stage methods, and though she never had seen a performance of grand opera in her life, her vivid imagination could picture it, and she knew the stage "business" of every part her mother had played.

John Raymond tormented himself about Adelina more than might have been expected of so generally sensible a young man, and certainly he did not attain by his worrying anything valuable. He thought about her during his hours at the hospital; as he sat alone in his hotel room in the early evening, trying to absorb a newly-published and much-talked-of treatise on psychophysics; as, later, he walked about the ghostly, deserted streets of the "financial district," far down town, and afterward, in bed, when he should have been asleep. He was busy with a knotty tangle, but the knots were drawn tight, and ever eluded him.

It was little wonder, then, that Doctor Raymond looked haggard and worn when he entered the Golfanti apartment at half-past two o'clock on the day that Doctor King was to be consulted. He was pleased when Adelina came forward and took his hand, as if she had not noticed or had forgotten his abrupt departure on Tuesday evening. Already

she had her hat on, and he liked that, too, because it indicated that she knew he would be on time. Perhaps that was not her idea, but he assumed it was, which was equally satisfactory to him. Pietro—at the piano, as usual—arose and bowed stiffly, then sat down again.

"Hello, Doctor!" hailed Luigi, coming from his bedroom, his soft hat in his hand. "We're all ready. Pietro he want to go, too, but Anton Rubinstein come, and he must have his lesson."

Raymond was relieved to hear this, for he would have objected decidedly to taking Pietro with them. One savage look at the irascible Doctor King, such as Pietro would be sure to shoot in his direction as soon as he touched Adelina would cause an explosion, and probably result finally in the doctor's refusal to look at the throat at all.

"We'd better start," said Raymond. "Doctor King's office is in Thirty-fifth street, and it will take us nearly half an hour to get there. I saw him at the hospital this morning, and he warned me not to be late. He is too busy to tolerate unpunctuality."

"There's that Anton Rubinstein now," grumbled Pietro, jumping up from his stool as he heard a bell tinkle on the outside door of the studio.

Before Luigi, Adelina and Raymond could

leave the room Pietro came back from the studio with a dirty scrap of letter-paper in his fingers.

"What that, Pietro?" asked his father.

"A note from Mrs. Rubinstein. I can't read it."

"Why not?" demanded his father, taking the paper from him. Then, as he looked at it, he continued: "I see. It's Deutsch. Read it for us, Adelina."

"My German is useful sometimes, you see, Jack," she laughed, as she glanced over the note and read: "'Mein mann hat das geklimper schon gans satt. Bitte lernen unseren Anton den Merry Widow Waltz spielen.'"

"What a twister, eh, Doctor?" said Luigi, with a wry face. "What it mean in Italian?"

"I'd better translate it into English, I think, Uncle," replied Adelina. "Mrs. Rubinstein wants her son to learn the 'Merry Widow Waltz.' That's all."

"He may learn it in the course of ten years, if he studies hard," growled Pietro, as he took back the note. "To think that I am called on to degrade myself, my music, my art, to knock the 'Merry Widow' waltz into that thick head. One, two, three—one, two, three."

"You go and teach him, Pietro, and not be

foolish," admonished Luigi, sharply. "His father a good tailor, and he work for us cheap. Besides, he pay fifty cents each for that boy's lesson. And we need the money," he added, after a pause.

"Bah! Blood money!" ejaculated poor Pietro, bouncing into the studio in a frame of mind that boded a stormy forty-five minutes for Anton.

"That boy of mine he have the artistic temperament all right," observed Luigi, looking thoughtfully at the studio door.

Luigi repeated the observation afterward, as he, Adelina and Raymond rode toward Doctor King's office in a Broadway car.

"He has, indeed," agreed Adelina, with rather more enthusiasm than Raymond thought necessary. "His 'Song of a Soul' is beautiful. He has not quite finished it, but there is enough to show what it will be."

"Did he write words for it, too?" asked Raymond.

"No. Mrs. Vittorio did that, and they fit the music beautifully."

"I thought perhaps Pietro had produced the lyric, as well as the music. He seems to be a sort of Admirable Crichton."

Adelina's quick look of surprise at John Raymond as he made this rather envious speech did not

escape him, and he knew that she considered it unworthy of him.

There was no loss of time when once they were in Doctor King's consulting-room. It was striking three as he told Adelina to take her hat off and sit down in one of those luxurious, leather-cushioned operating chairs which mock the terror-stricken patient by giving ease to the body while the mind is in torment. A lamp with a powerful reflector was attached by a movable nickel-plated bracket to one arm of the chair, and Doctor King adjusted it so that the light almost blinded her. He placed a round mirror with a hole in the centre on his forehead, by means of a strap that passed around his head. Then he gave her a touch of nausea by sinking the chair-seat unexpectedly a few inches by means of a lever at the back which he worked with his foot.

"Comfortable?" he asked, grimly.

"Yes," she replied, while her heart beat so loudly that she believed she could hear it.

"Keep quiet, then."

He thrust a glistening instrument, like a miniature metal golf club, into her mouth and looked. Adelina felt as if she were choking, but that did not disturb Doctor King.

On the mantelpiece was an uncompromising

square clock of black marble. John Raymond, Luigi and Adelina counted every second as it was ticked off in a deep, lugubrious monotone. The stern old doctor was taking no notice of the clock. His attention was concentrated on the delicate organ in her throat, upon which the strong reflector sent a point of white light.

Nearly a minute elapsed before he took away the instrument with which he had been holding down her tongue, and told her she might breathe for a few minutes.

She *had* been breathing, in a way, but it was a relief to be able to exercise her lungs to their full capacity a dozen times, while Doctor King dipped his golf club into some antiseptic liquid in a glass and wiped it, as he regarded her with an expression that gave no key to his thoughts.

"Now, again," he grunted, as he saw that she had rested enough to bear a renewal of the ordeal.

Once more the mirror was adjusted, and he forced down her tongue unconcernedly, as he directed his point of light here and there in her throat. Luigi softly rubbed his hands, damp with anxiety, one over the other, while John Raymond's eyes never left the girl's face. When, at last, Doctor King moved back for the second time, allowing

Adelina to breathe at will, it was to John Raymond that he spoke.

"Doctor," he said, "I find—"

The two physicians moved away to the window, and the rest of the sentence was inaudible to Adelina and Luigi. They could see that the older man was explaining something to the other, who nodded from time to time, but without showing either elation or dismay in his calm professional face.

"Doctor King finds that a slight operation is required," Raymond told them, as the consultation ended. "He has explained to me the nature of the ailment, but it would be difficult to convey it to you in untechnical terms. I should strongly advise that the operation be performed at once. Doctor King is willing to do it, and he says it will be all over in less than ten minutes. It will not be at all painful, Adelina. A local anaesthetic will prevent your feeling it at all.

"I am not afraid of a little pain," declared Adelina.

"There is one thing we must not forget to tell the young lady," interposed Doctor King, "and that is that she must not speak for a week afterward—not a word."

"That will be a test of feminine endurance, in-

deed," said Adelina, smiling. "But I shall be equal to it, I hope."

"Then I'll go ahead," was the short response of the surgeon. "Let me show you, Doctor."

Thrusting his instrument into Adelina's mouth in the casual manner of an entomologist exhibiting an impaled butterfly in a cabinet to some fellow-collector, Doctor King requested Raymond to look.

"See it, Doctor?" he asked, focussing the reflected light on the spot where he had found the defect.

"Yes," answered Raymond, coolly.

"Very well. That is what I am going to treat," announced the specialist, spraying cocaine into Adelina's throat with as much indifference to her opinion of it as if he had been sprinkling a lawn.

"I suppose, Doctor," put in Luigi, anxiously, "there is no doubt that the operation will be a success?"

"Not much doubt—about one in a thousand, I should say," replied Doctor King, carelessly, over his shoulder.

As he had promised, the operation was completed within ten minutes, and half an hour afterward, Adelina, with a handkerchief held to her mouth to keep out the cold, sat between John Raymond and Luigi on a car, going home. Pietro was

at the front door when they reached the house, and his anxiety made him forget his usual coldness to Raymond. He was glad to see them back, with Adelina looking none the worse for her experience.

"Did it hurt you, Adelina?" he asked, eagerly.

"Adelina not allowed to speak. Don't ask fool question, Pietro," commanded his father.

"She must not use her vocal cords in any way for seven days," explained Raymond. "They must have a little time to recover from the shock that is unavoidable even with such a slight operation as this has been. I shall look at the throat every day, to make sure there are no complications."

"You not expect there will be those—what you call?—"

"Complications? No, Signor Golfanti. I do not. But there is always the possibility. That is why I shall examine the throat daily until the week has expired."

They had been going up stairs while talking, and as they got to the big room, Adelina, throwing off her hat, dropped upon the piano-stool and began fingering the keys.

"I would not play, if I were you, Addie. You might forget yourself and begin to sing," warned Raymond.

She arose obediently, while Pietro secretly execrated the insolence of this doctor from Ohio, who took it on himself to tell her what she must and must not do. Like most persons in love, especially when they have little hope of their passion ever being returned, he was ready to quarrel with any hint of proprietorship by another.

"I will come in to-morrow evening, and look at the throat," continued Raymond. "After all, a week is not long."

"Isn't it? If you were a woman, you might have a different opinion, Doctor," remarked Luigi, with a chuckle. "I have been married, and I never knew my wife to keep her tongue still for a week in all her life."

It *was* hard for Adelina not to sing, or even to speak. She had found that out already, in just the short time that she had been home from the doctor's. But with a clenching of her teeth, she put the almost irresistible impulse to use her voice behind her, and when John Raymond went out, his last glimpse of her was as she began her preparations for supper with all her usual cheerfulness.

That evening, when Luigi had settled down, with a cigarette, to read his paper, and Adelina, at the other side of the table, was sewing, Pietro established himself at the piano, resolved to complete

the melody which had first come to him as a fragment in that dewy wood in Azalia, and to which he had since given the title of "The Song of a Soul," at this one sitting, or know the reason why.

"This is an awfully bum light," he complained, as he fiddled with the lamp on the piano. "But I don't care for that if I can get this music the way I want it."

With a pencil in his mouth—save when he was using it to jot down or alter a note on the music-paper in front of him—Pietro ran off vagrant strains, with runs, chords and rippling arpeggios as accompaniment. Adelina listened intently, and Luigi, looking up from his paper now and then, gave sympathetic ear to the efforts of his son. It was hard work. Anyone could see that, as Pietro repeatedly snatched the pencil from his lips, hastily put down a few notes, and then, after trying the measure for a second time, scratched them out and put down others. It seemed as if it never would come right.

"I hope you won't bust the piano with your 'Song of a Soul,' Pietro," said Luigi, when his son, after a long run, thundered a bass chord which threatened such a catastrophe.

"Don't talk to me just now, father," pleaded Pietro, piteously. "I almost had it then."

"What you think of it, Adelina?" asked Luigi.

She had placed a small pad of white paper on the table before her, with a pencil. She pointed to her mouth, to remind him that she must not speak, and wrote on the pad: "He will get it, and I shall sing it when I am allowed to use my voice."

She tore off the top sheet and handed it to Luigi, who was so delighted that he had to carry it around to the piano to show to Pietro, who turned to look gratefully at Adelina ere he resumed his composing.

"I believe he'll get it, Adelina. You are right," was Luigi's own comment, as he returned to his chair and newspaper.

Adelina sewed on, and Pietro, squaring his shoulders, as if for a supreme effort, played again the melody he had sent to her in Azalia, but which was still only the "fragment" he had called it then. He had written more, but nothing that he could do now seemed to be in the same spirit, and he had wondered whether the original was some fugitive inspiration which he never would be able to catch again.

"I'll read over all the words," he said to himself. "Perhaps that will help me.. Let me see. Where are they? Oh, yes. Here!"

He dug up a sheet of paper from a mass of

music on a low stand by his side, and read aloud from it the stanza which had been written for him by Mrs. Vittorio, as follows:

"'Every soul hath its song—
Its melody divine,
Rising to ecstasy,
And so hath mine.
Just let me sing my song divine,
Or I shall die of sorrow.'"

"What that, Pietro?" questioned Luigi, who had been listening.

"The 'Song of a Soul,' confound it!" was the short reply.

"It seems to confound you, Pietro—that 'Song of a Soul,'" observed Luigi. "But keep on. Don't give up. Writing music is like making a horse-shoe. It's the steady hammering that tells."

"Horse-shoe!" growled Pietro. "And you a musician!"

He kept on, alternately playing and writing, for another half-hour, while Luigi and Adelina pursued their respective occupations in silence, both listening to the young man's struggle for the strains he wanted. Suddenly, as he finished writing rapidly, with nervous fingers, several measures, he

waved his pencil over his head, and shouted, exultantly:

"I have it! I have it! Oh! Adelina! If only you could sing it!"

She ran to him and leaned over his shoulder, scanning what he had written. Then she pointed to the piano-keys and to him, telling him, mutely, to play it for her.

"Play it all through, Pietro," called out Luigi, from his place at the other side of the table. "Let's hear what you have done. Play it, my son."

Willingly enough, Pietro obeyed. His practiced fingers swept the keys, and the completion of the melody he had sought so long—ever since that fragrant morning in Azalia, when the birds and the whispering leaves gave him the first haunting strains—rang out in a wild burst of harmonic passion. "The Song of a Soul" was born.

## CHAPTER XVIII

"'Tis good tho' music oft hath such a charm,
To make bad good; and good provoke to harm."

It did not seem such a very long week, after all, notwithstanding a popular impression that no woman could hold her tongue for that period of time unless she was gagged. Adelina did not mind it much. She always had her pencil and little pad of paper when she wanted to communicate with Luigi or Pietro, and she never forgot that she must not speak. For hours she was alone, while they were away, visiting their pupils, and during their absence the pianos were always closed, lest she might inadvertently sit down to sing. This apprehension was more Luigi's than her own. Her great ambition was ever in her mind. Had she been content to be an ordinarily good singer, the operation on her throat would not have been necessary. But she had resolved to become as famous as her mother, if her natural gifts would permit, and to enable her to reach the heights on which she had set her hopes she would have gone through a great deal more inconvenience than she had been

subjected to in Doctor King's chair. It was, then, extremely improbable that she would be careless in carrying out the instructions on the fulfilment of which the ultimate success of the treatment might depend.

She never even spoke, much less sang. It was not difficult. She knew the deaf-and-dumb alphabet, and she found plenty of people—tradesmen and others—with whom she could communicate by this means. She taught it to Pietro one evening, to divert his mind when he was trying more persistently than usual to make love to her. Not that it helped matters much. He learned the deaf-mute language quickly, but used it generally to get on the old tiresome topic of his adoration, until she wished she had not given him this new way of annoying her. So she told him, on her pad of paper, that if he knew how idiotically absurd he looked trying to be sentimental with his fingers, he never would do it again. After that he addressed her only on the pad. Then she pretended she could not read his writing. But his heart-broken look was too much for her, and she was obliged to relent, telling him that his penmanship was bad only when he scrawled too hurriedly. All this amused her and helped to pass the time, and the days flew by faster than she had hoped.

John Raymond came every evening and made a professional examination. On the third day of the week he brought, in a black-leather bag, the necessary apparatus for spraying her throat with a mixture prepared by Doctor King with his own hands, and in which Raymond had the greatest of faith. There was also a circular reflector, to be strapped on the forehead, such as Doctor King had used, and a smaller one, of peculiar shape, which Raymond called a "throat-mirror."

"You are not going to perform another operation, eh?" asked Luigi, somewhat fearfully, as he saw these ominous articles.

"No, unless you call spraying the throat an operation. It's as painless as taking a glass of water," replied Raymond.

He used the spray then and every day thereafter, and as Adelina never complained, Luigi pretended to be satisfied.

So the week dragged along, day by day, until the evening on which Adelina was to be allowed to speak—and to sing. It had seemed like a month to the girl. The original intention had been that she should go to Doctor King's office at the end of the week. But four days after he had performed the operation a cable message summoned him to Berlin as consulting surgeon in a difficult and im-

portant case, the patient being a royal personage. So it happened that he was on the high seas, in one of the new five-day "greyhounds," when the time came to restore Adelina to speech. Before departing, however, he had entrusted her case to Doctor Raymond, giving him instructions in writing.

"That's the way with doctors," grumbled Pietro, on the arrival of the important seventh day, when Raymond explained this to them all. "They don't care what becomes of their patients. They just go away and leave them to die. It's murder. That's what I call it."

Luigi was shocked at this language in the presence of Raymond.

"What you mean, Pietro? What you know? Nothing. A doctor he have to go away when he sent for, same as you or me. Doctor King he gentleman. Doctor Raymond know all about Adelina, and he take care of her. Besides, there is nothing the matter with her. All she have to do is talk. Doctor Raymond can hear her do that as well as Doctor King. You ask pardon of Doctor Raymond. You must, when you insult a gentleman."

"I didn't mean to insult Doctor Raymond or anyone else," protested Pietro, humbly. "I am anxious for Adelina, that's all. So is Doctor Raymond, I know. I apologize, of course."

John Raymond waved his hand and laughed good-humoredly.

"Don't mention it, Pietro. I know your solicitude for Adelina's welfare. We are all anxious to be assured that she has quite recovered. We shall soon know."

"In ten minutes, eh?" asked Luigi.

"Hardly so soon as that," corrected Raymond. "But I will make an examination and see what it looks like. My instructions from Doctor King are explicit. I have them here."

He took from his note-book a small sheet of paper and read from it aloud:

"Examine the throat. If there are no signs of inflammation, spray it, and the patient may speak. After five minutes, spray the throat again. If everything is all right, the voice should be clearer and stronger than ever."

"If everything is all right?" snapped Pietro. "Why, there isn't any doubt of that, is there, Doctor Raymond?"

"Of course not," interposed Luigi, with conviction. "Don't be fool, Pietro. Doctor King he say on that paper the voice will be clearer and stronger than ever."

"He said it *should* be," Raymond reminded him.

"All the same thing. It will be. I know the

voice. Have I not trained it for weeks? It is splendid. Magnificent! It have always been so! The trifle uneven quality I speak to you about, that is nothing. She would have been great singer if that unevenness been left alone. Now, if it not any better, she still be able to sing."

"Yes," said Raymond, slowly. "But it is well always to be prepared for disappointment. Doctor King told me there was one chance in a thousand that her voice would fail altogether if it were not improved."

"What? Do you mean that she might not be able to sing at all?" almost shrieked Pietro.

"Hush, Pietro. Don't be a fool," commanded Luigi. "One chance in thousand, he said. Well, what that? Nothing. Doctor King he say that it might fail only to mean it couldn't be. Eh, Doctor?"

"There is nothing absolutely sure in surgery. That's what he meant, I think," answered Raymond. "Still, Doctor King is one of the most eminent throat specialists in the world. You can see that is so, or he would not have been called to Germany now. How does the throat feel, Adelina?"

She was about to speak, but Raymond raised his hand warningly, and she smiled an apology.

"Write it," he directed.

She wrote the word "Dry" on her pad.

"Dry, eh? Well, we'll look at it and see."

It was with even more tenderness than usual that John Raymond placed her in a chair by the table, and then took Pietro's lamp from the piano, to supplement the light of that on the table.

"Will you hold this lamp, Signor?"

"Si. Where I stand with it?"

"I will show you," answered Raymond, as he put on his forehead-reflector and raised the girl's chin, so that he could look straight into her mouth.

"I am glad the time have come for her to speak —and sing," remarked Luigi who found it hard to keep his tongue quiet. "She have good news yesterday. Signor Antonio Valeri. I sing with him long time ago. He sing with Adelina's mother, too. Now he impresario. He make Adelina sing for him one day—before she go to Doctor King—and he say he take her in his company to Havana and South America. It good engagement."

"So I should think."

Raymond said this so composedly that Adelina looked surprised, and then relieved. She had half feared some outburst. But he was carefully arranging the reflector on his forehead with one hand, while he used the other to guide Luigi with the lamp. He seemed to be simply the steady-pulsed

surgeon, deep in the delicate work he had to do, and nothing else. But just then his hand chanced to touch her cheek, and she felt his fingers icy cold. He sprayed her throat, and, laying the atomizer on the table, took out his watch.

"You can put the lamp down, Signor. We have to wait five minutes."

But Luigi would not put the lamp out of his hand.

"No. I hold it," he insisted. "Isn't it grand for Adelina she go with Signor Valeri? She always want to go on the stage. She will have only small parts in Havana. But when she go to South America she sing Leonora, Carmen, Margherita, Amneris—and Elsa and Brunhilda, if Valeri put on Wagner opera."

Adelina looked appealingly at Luigi, but he did not understand that her glance conveyed a prayer to him to change the subject. He thought she was only deprecating his boastful tone on her behalf.

"I tell the truth, Adelina," he went on, with well-intentioned obstinacy. "You can sing Wagner. Brunhilda's music is always heavy, but you will sing the Wagner *rôles*, like you sing Italian. Your voice always have power. It will be the more strong now. Ah! We all will be proud of you when the audience jump and yell with joy,

and throw the flowers, and the jewels from women's necks and arms, and—Oh! I have seen it with your mother many times, and it will be so with you. Won't it, Doctor?"

"It must be tiresome to hold that lamp, Signor. We have three minutes yet," said Raymond, his eyes on his watch.

"No I like to do it. When Adelina she go away, I go with her. I shall be stage manager of the company. Signor Valeri he like me."

"And I have to remain behind, alone," complained Pietro.

John Raymond glanced swiftly at Adelina, but she showed no concern that Pietro would not be with her if she left New York. At least, he need fear no rival in this ill-tempered boy.

"The five minutes are up," he announced at last, as he put the watch in his pocket. "I will use the spray again. The light, please, Signor."

Adelina had not spoken yet. Raymond had thought it better for her to keep silence until he had sprayed the throat a second time. So, as he had not told her she could speak, she had not done so. She had kept quiet for a week, and five minutes more would not matter, she reflected. He used the spray and then said, quietly:

"You may speak now."

"Thank you."

They were her first words for a week, and surely an expression of gratitude to the young doctor who had tried to give her all the benefit that science had at its command was the most graceful thing that could have come from her lips at such a time.

"When she sing?" eagerly inquired Luigi.

"I think it would be advisable for her to wait five minutes or so," was Raymond's answer. "Doctor King's instructions say that she may sing as soon as the throat has been sprayed the second time if everything is all right. But it can do no harm to put off the test for a few minutes."

"Very well. I'll wait," said Adelina, resignedly. "But I am so anxious to try my new voice."

"So. It will be a new voice," chirped Luigi. "A fine voice! A great voice! Eh, Doctor?"

"I hope so."

John Raymond walked to the window and gazed out listlessly. The sun had been gone for two hours, and the dark street, dolefully illumined here and there by flickering gas-jets in the mean little stores, and by a street-lamp at the corner where the saloon was driving its usual brisk evening trade, was not inspiriting. A group of boys stood outside the grocery, talking noisily. They

were planning a warlike visit to a rival "gang" in the next street, and their strident cries came up to him in a depressing cacophony. Rubinstein, the tailor, was sewing, in his favorite froglike attitude, in his shop-window. A woman was coming up the cellar steps below Rubinstein, with a ten-cent bucket of coal, and a laboring man, in muddy trousers, fissured shoes and a blue flannel shirt, carried along the street a tin pail containing beer, his grimy face wearing the anticipatory convivial expression common to his kind when "rushing the growler."

An itinerant candy merchant, with many-colored cheap confections in separate compartments of his flat push-cart—the whole carefully covered by glass, to protect its contents from marauding youngsters—came swiftly down the thoroughfare, having been chased off Sixth avenue by a policeman. The roar of a passing train on the elevated railway mingled momentarily with the other sounds, dying away grumblingly as rapidly as it had obtruded itself.

A maple tree, stunted, but sturdy in spite of its being cramped in a narrow yard at the side of the saloon, shook a shower of yellow leaves, like a benison, on the black roof of an old shed so dilapidated that it looked as if it might crumple into ruins under their weight. The yard was called by

the saloon-keeper a "summer garden," and even on this rather chilly autumn evening a man and woman were hobnobbing there in maudlin converse over "schooners" of beer.

John Raymond could have described every detail of the sordid panorama a week, a month, or a year afterward, but at this time he did not know that he had seen anything of it. He was thinking of something else. If Adelina should find that her voice had become all that she and Luigi hoped, what would she do? It was a question already answered. She would join this opera company, with Signor Valeri, and go out of his life entirely. Once let her feel the glamor of the stage, and how hopeless it all would be for him. He never doubted that she would be a popular singer—perhaps a great one. The same public that had made an idol of her mother (the same in the abstract, although different in its actual individuality), would welcome her. The incense of applause would be in her nostrils and—poison her. Yes, he was sure that that would be its effect. She could not be of the stage and remain the sweet, pure girl he had known. It never struck him that he might be mistaken in his estimate of stage people as a class. He would have denied indignantly that he was prejudiced. Azalia regarded all "play-actors" as irre-

sponsible ne'er-do-wells. He had heard his father say, more than once, that they were "naturally the children of Beelzebub." The Azalia point of view was his own, plus the unreasoning abhorrence of the theatre he had inherited from his father. Add to all this the fact that John Raymond was madly in love with Adelina Von Hagen, and it was no wonder his thoughts were agonizing as he stood at this window, looking out upon the dark street. But could he not prevent the sacrifice? Was it not possible for him, as a doctor and a student of advanced metaphysics, to interpose some influence which would save her, in spite of herself? Could he not, perhaps, employ the mental suggestion at which she had scoffed, to—"

"Jack, aren't the five minutes up?"

It was Adelina who had interrupted his reverie.

"Yes," he answered. "You may try to sing now."

## CHAPTER XIX

"Nought but a blank remains, a dead, void space,
A step of life that promised such a race."

Adelina started when John Raymond came from the shadows at the window into the light of the lamp which had been replaced on the piano by Pietro. His face had changed in some strange way. It was drawn and white, and the fixed glare in his eyes frightened her. He walked with a slow, mechanical step, and she saw that his hand shook as it rested on the top of the piano.

She had been chilled by his hollow tone, when, at the window, he had told her she might try to sing. It had not expressed the hopefulness she had expected. Yet she was sure he was as anxious to hear what effect the operation had had upon her voice as were Luigi and Pietro. No doubt it was that anxiety which had affected him. He felt the responsibility, of course. It was he who had advised the operation, and he had been in charge of her, as a medical man, since Doctor King had gone away.

Adelina never had been a doctor, but she could

understand what a strain it must be to feel that on one's skill and care depended the life of a patient. And singing was her life. No matter how strongly opposed he might be to her going on the stage, he would have to accept the inevitable. In the meantime, his pride in his profession naturally would outweigh all other considerations, and he would rather see her adopt a career he disliked than that his judgment as a physician should be at fault.

These thoughts rushed through the girl's brain so rapidly that Luigi hardly noticed how she stood still for a few moments, looking over Pietro's shoulder while he played the opening movement of "The Song of a Soul." She seemed to be only reading the notes on the music before her. Luigi brought her to herself by asking:

"Adelina, are you ready?"

"Yes, Uncle."

"Buono! Now we will hear. Doctor Raymond he want to know what the operation it do for you, eh?"

"Yes. This is the critical moment," assented Raymond, still in the hard tone in which he had answered Adelina when he stood at the window.

"Critical? It is not critical. We know what she is going to do. We know that she will sing

better," rejoined Luigi, impatiently. "Sing, Adelina."

"Very well, Uncle."

All the doubt had gone from her voice, and she smiled at Raymond and Luigi alternately, as she stood at the piano, ready to begin.

"Now, Pietro, your 'Song of a Soul.' I told you I would sing it first."

The delight in Pietro's face made her glad she had told him this. Although she cared nothing about him in the way he would have liked, she sympathized with him in his music.

"Here are the words," he said, fumbling among the music on the stand beside him. "I have them on a sheet of paper somewhere."

"Never mind finding it, Pietro," she cried. "I know the lines backward. I've been learning them for a week." Then, with a rapt expression on her face that thrilled Pietro through and through, she recited: "'Just let me sing my song divine, or I shall die of sorrow.'"

Raymond was gazing at her with a strange intentness unlike any look she ever had seen on his face in all the years they had known each other. It was as if he were trying to grasp her inmost thoughts, so that he might bend them to his will. She strove to put aside this impression, as ridicu-

lous, but it came back, and it was only when she resolutely looked away from him that she could shake off the feeling of there being something uncanny and sinister in his regard.

"Jack," she broke forth, impulsively, "I want to thank you for all you've done—and are doing."

"Don't thank me, Addie," he answered, in a strained, unsteady tone.

"But I must. I know it must be terribly hard for you to do this, because, although it means everything to me, my everything doesn't include you —except as my very good friend, Jack."

He took her two hands and looked intently into her face, as he said, slowly:

"Addie, suppose that, after all, you couldn't?"

"What?" she asked, wonderingly.

But he waved his hand, with a smile, to signify that it was nothing of any consequence, and she turned to the piano as Pietro played the prelude of the "Song of a Soul."

"Here! What are going to do?" broke in Luigi, authoritatively. "You must not sing the song at the beginning. First come the scales—the exercises, to warm up the vocal cords."

"Oh, Uncle Luigi!" protested Adelina. "I promised Pietro his song should be the first."

"Pouf! I say no. First come the exercise. Pietro, the scale on page seventeen."

Argument would have been useless, as both Adelina and Pietro well knew. So the young man opened the exercise book at page seventeen and struck a chord.

"Si. Now, sing," ordered Luigi.

John Raymond leaned over the piano, and his strained look might have pierced her through had it suddenly taken on material substance. It was like a rapier. Perhaps, in his mentality, he was using it as such a weapon. Adelina did not even glance toward him, but she was conscious of his steady gaze—how, she could not have explained. She only knew it was there. Luigi saw it, but he attributed it to nervous anxiety. He had that feeling himself. It would have been strange, indeed, if Doctor Raymond had not evinced agitation in some form or another.

Pietro sounded the chord again, and then ran an ascending octave. The girl sang the first note, missed the next six, but ended clear and full on the last.

"That is well," said Luigi. "The tone is fine. Now run the scale."

"I was trying to do so," answered Adelina,

with a smile. "The week of idleness has put me out of practice."

John Raymond's eyelids nearly closed, so that his eyes were two narrow slits, glistening in the light of the lamp like those of a wolf about to spring.

"You did not take the breath, Adelina," suggested Luigi. "Remember what I always tell you, that you cannot get the tone without the wind. Now! Again!"

She tried, but this time her failure was not to be mistaken. She could not even sound the final note, and, with a pale and frightened face, she turned to Luigi, as if for help, gasping:

"Uncle, I can't sing. My throat seems to be asleep."

Never did John Raymond's gaze remove itself from her face.

"Your throat wake up directly. Play, Pietro, play!" cried Luigi, his voice shrill with sudden terror. "There must be some mistake. The doctor he say the voice would be better than ever. Sing, Adelina! Play, Pietro!"

Once more did she make an effort that was pitiful in its desperation, but Pietro, with the piano, left her far behind. Her ear was true, and she knew what she was trying to do. But her vocal organs

seemed to be paralyzed, and all they would produce were a few feeble sounds that shocked her as much as they did her horrified teacher and Pietro.

"Adelina, what is the matter?" shrieked Luigi.

"I don't know, Uncle," she moaned.

"Try again," urged Pietro. "Once more."

But Adelina only shook her head.

Luigi walked upon and down, holding his head in his hands, while Adelina, like a statue of hopeless grief, stood, with parted lips, looking wildly at the exercise, wondering what it all meant. She had not realized the awfulness of it yet. Luigi stopped in front of Raymond, who had never moved since Adelina began to sing, and still glared at her as if he could not look away.

"Doctor Raymond, can't you do something? Spray the throat again. Here! I get the things," cried Luigi, desperately.

The heartbroken old man ran to the table, where the black bag, containing the apparatus, still stood, and had taken out the atomizer and reflector before Raymond said to him, in pitying, but hopeless accents:

"It would do no good. You remember, Doctor King said that there was one chance in a thousand of the voice being lost altogether as the result of the operation. One in a thousand."

"ONE IN A THOUSAND."—*Page 285*

At last she comprehended. With a stifled groan, as of some helpless creature of the forest who had received a mortal blow, too severe to permit even of a full cry of pain, Adelina staggered to a chair and with an elbow on the table, sat staring into vacancy. Pietro was by her side in an instant, she pushed him away, as she repeated, murmuringly, like one talking in sleep:

"One in a thousand! One in a thousand!"

For a few minutes she sat quite still. Pietro, hurt that she would not let him attempt to console her, was glowering at Raymond, who did not see it. Raymond's eyes never left Adelina. He was watching her with the sort of expression his face had worn that morning in the hospital, as he contemplated a patient afflicted with a rare and incurable disease. He had been deeply interested in the case, and while, as a humane man, he had observed with commiseration the writhings which denoted awful agony, he had not failed to recognize their value to the physician as diagnostic manifestations. The fact that the patient could not recover was only a pathological incident. Perhaps he regarded Adelina's incurableness with the same philosophical indifference. And perhaps, if it had been possible to probe to the bottom of his mind, as he stood there, with his back to the piano, there might even have

been found satisfaction. It is doubtful whether John Raymond, himself, could have told what his feelings were just then.

Luigi had been at the window, looking out upon the same sort of scene as had been presented to John Raymond half an hour before, and, like the doctor, he had not consciously seen anything. Now, as a sudden thought came to him, he went over to Adelina, and placing a hand soothingly on her bowed head, he whispered:

"Adelina!"

"Yes, Uncle?"

His sympathetic voice was the only thing that could arouse her, and John Raymond noted it with fierce jealousy.

"Don't give way, carissima. Your voice may come back to-morrow. It is sometimes so. I have known it with myself. On some night I could sing, and others I could not. It will be so with you. Do I not say right, Doctor?"

John Raymond shook his head decisively.

"In such a case as hers there is no hope. It would be heartless in me to say anything but the truth. Don't let her ever try to sing again. It might cause her to lose even her speaking voice."

Luigi started in dismay. Then he stared into

the impassive countenance of the doctor, as if to gather hope. But there was none there."

"Mustn't she try again?" he faltered. "Just once?"

"She may try now, while I am here, if she likes," replied Raymond. "Then, if any harm comes from it, I shall be at hand. But don't let her sing afterward. If she does, I can't answer for the consequences."

Rising from her chair suddenly, the girl went toward Raymond, a wild, unnatural fire in her eye.

"Jack," she pleaded, "do something for me. You're a doctor. Say something. Does this mean——" The words she would utter seemed to be frozen in her throat. "Tell me. Am I the one in the thousand?"

"Heaven help me, yes," answered Raymond, in a scarcely audible voice.

"Heaven!" she cried, in an agony of despair, "What is heaven? Why does the Omnipotent Power which rules us punish me so? What have I ever done to deserve this? Have I neglected my talents? Have I sinned so grievously? Where is the divine mercy? Is this it? One in a thousand! I don't believe it! Play, Pietro, your 'Song of a Soul'—and my soul will sing it!"

Pietro played a few chords, and she essayed

to sing the melody, but in vain. She could only speak the words. There seemed to be no power in her voice.

"Every soul hath its song—it's melody divine!" she intoned, striving with all her might to reach the notes as they were written. Then she gave it up.

"I can't sing it now, Pietro. But I will start all over again. I'll spend a lifetime in practice. Yes, I'll start again."

She dropped into her chair, with that awful look that had been on her face before. Luigi tried once more to encourage her.

"Adelina, maybe the voice come back again—to-morrow—next week. Yes. Eh, Doctor?"

"I don't know," answered Raymond.

"You do know," interrupted Adelina. "You do know. You are trying to spare me, as you've been doing ever since you looked into my throat. I can't sing. It's all over—everything."

"There are other things in life," hinted Raymond.

"Not for me," she moaned, with the positiveness of despair.

Luigi jerked his head significantly toward the door, looking at Raymond, who walked to the side table for his hat. He hesitated momentarily, as if

to go to Adelina to bid her good night. But she never looked up—although she must have known that he was about to go—and with a silent farewell to Luigi, John Raymond went out.

Pietro had been mechanically straightening out a pile of sheet-music, and seemed not to notice Raymond's departure. Luigi lighted a cigarette.

"Does your throat feel different from what it was before we went to Doctor King's, Adelina?" asked Luigi, after a few seconds of reflective puffing.

"Yes, when I sing."

Her voice was hard and her eyes were quite dry.

"Hum! When you sing? That's all that counts."

Luigi waggled his doleful head, so that the gray side locks fell over his eyes grotesquely, and he choked on a mouthful of cigarette-smoke.

"Maladetta! I can't smoke, either," he muttered. "But I not go under any operation for that."

"What did you say, father?" asked Pietro, incuriously, his hands busy with the sheet-music and his thoughts on the pathetic girlish figure huddled up at the table.

"Nothing."

An effect of the calamity was that they asked

and answered trivial questions without caring anything about them, or expecting an answer, as people will when there is death in the house. It was a vent for their nervousness. Father and son both were in such a strain that it seemed as if something in them must break unless they found an outlet for their sorrow in some way. So, when Luigi had said "Nothing," he lighted another cigarette and smoked voluminously through mouth and nose, while Pietro resumed a hissing of the melody of his "Song of a Soul" under his breath, which he had been doing, unconsciously, ever since he had begun to paw over his sheet-music. From Adelina came not a sound.

"Is it dark outside?" asked Pietro, presently.

Luigi did not reply for nearly a minute, as if he needed time to consider the answer to such a tremendous query. Then he said, solemnly:

"Yes, except where the lamps are."

Neither noticed the fatuity of the question and answer. Luigi lighted a fresh cigarette, and Pietro hissed "The Song of a Soul" from the beginning.

Suddenly, a great sob broke the stillness of the room, followed by another and another, and then the girl, raising her head from the table, covered

her face with her hands, and let the sobs storm forth as they would.

Ah, those blessed tears! Adelina wept as if her heart would rend apart. But there never can be a broken heart where tears flow. Luigi Golfanti knew this so well that he smiled as he walked quietly over to his son, and, touching him on the shoulder, said, in a low tone:

"She safe now, Pietro. Come. We go to bed."

## CHAPTER XX

"One indeed I knew
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true."

As soon as John Raymond found himself alone in his room that night he sat down and pored over a certain passage in a book that lay open on the table. The running head at the top of the page was "Mental Suggestion." He pressed his hand to his forehead while he read, as if to help him to comprehend. Once he got up and paced the room, deep in thought. Then he sat down again, to read and re-read the paragraph that held him. He seemed to be trying to draw from it some information about which he was uncertain, and yet hopeful, for he put his finger on a line now and then, and at such times one might have thought he was endeavoring to hold down a fact by main strength until he had grasped its full significance. Especially did he do this with the last few sentences. Something was there that gave him a sort of grim satisfaction. The paragraph which he read over so many times was as follows:

"It is well established in many minds that a person of strong will often can control the thoughts, and even the acts, of another, if the conditions are favorable. The scientific nature of these favorable conditions has never been determined, because they vary in different subjects. In general, the test is more likely to be successful when the subject has faith in the power of the operator, and is well disposed or friendly toward him. Mental suggestion has been employed beneficially by physicians, and doubtless is often a factor when not even the doctor himself suspects it. Unfortunately, the influence can also be exerted to the detriment of the subject, as is occasionally seen at public exhibitions, when the operator causes persons from the audience to go through absurd antics or temporarily to lose some of their faculties. A subject may be told that he cannot speak, sing or move, and unless his will is much stronger than that of the operator, he will find that actually he cannot utter a sound or stir a muscle until released from the strange power that has held him. One of the phases of the phenomena of mental suggestion which is of particular interest is that the will of the stronger mind may control the volition of the subject from afar and long after the active experiment has been finished."

"That is clear enough," muttered Raymond, as

he went over the closing sentence for the fifth time. "It does not say that it is always so, however, nor even that it is usual. That word 'may' might mean anything. 'The will of the stronger mind *may* control the subject from afar and long after—' In other words, it doesn't always. These professors are always so cautious when they venture into print. Afraid of what other professors may say, I suppose."

He closed the book and put it on a shelf with a few other volumes, all relating to his profession, which composed his library in New York, and stood in front of the dresser, contemplating a photograph in a frame. It was that of a girl, and it is hardly necessary to say what girl, especially when it is told that he put the picture to his lips ere he turned away and prepared to go to bed. He had looked quickly about him as he put the photograph down, as if half ashamed of so sentimental an act. And yet he had locked his door, and his window-blind was tightly closed.

"I wonder what she is doing?" he asked of the darkness, as he dropped upon his pillow. "Poor little girl! Asleep, I hope. I'm afraid I never shall forget her face when she realized that— It was cruel. Yes, it *was* cruel. But when a canker is in the tissues, the only possible cure is to cut it out.

And to think that I had to be the surgeon! But there was no one else. Ah, well! She'll get over it in time, and then—then——"

If, through the blackness, he saw her coming down a garden-path in the sunlight, in bridal garments, holding out to him a handful of royal-purple pansies, the vision may have been a continuation of his speculations where they had ceased to be audible. Or it may have been a dream. What did it matter?

When Raymond went to the Golfanti apartment the next evening, Luigi, knowing he was coming, met him at the front door. He wanted to speak to the doctor before he went up stairs.

"When we got up this morning she have breakfast ready," said Luigi. "She look white, and her eyes red. But she laugh—oh, how she laugh! Pietro and me we know she only put it on, but we laugh, too, as if we had a joke. Then she pour out the coffee, talking all the time about the breakfast, and Anton Rubinstein, and Mrs. Vittorio. But never a word about her not able to sing last night. I not know what to make of it. So I laugh when she laugh, and we talk, all three, like we very happy."

"She is well, then?"

Luigi shook his head, and putting his right

forefinger along the side of his nose, to express extreme sagacity, he answered: "She not well, but she not admit. Pietro he go out after breakfast. When she and me alone she say, 'Uncle Luigi, may I still live here?' I almost swear—in Italian. But I don't quite. I only tell her she live with us always—unless she get married. Then she say she teach the piano and earn enough to pay her share of the housekeeping, and she want to stay all her life with her dear Uncle Luigi. That what she call me."

He almost broke down when he got to this stage of his recital, but recovered himself with a mighty sniff and went on:

"She ask me never to speak about her voice again, and to tell Pietro and you. What she want, she say, is to forget that she ever could sing. We must all forget it, too. That was all she asked—Oh, yes, there was one other thing: She beg that Pietro not play any more his 'Song of a Soul' when she home. Now, come up and see her, Doctor. But do not speak about last night."

Raymond did not stay long that evening, but if he feared that it would be painful to meet Adelina for the first time after her disappointment he was decidedly mistaken. She greeted him smilingly, and seemed so determined that he should be

at his ease, that Pietro's jealousy threatened to burst into flame more than once. She chatted about the people of Azalia and recalled many incidents of the old days in the garden and under the porch with the crimson ramblers. She never mentioned St. Jude's choir, however, nor referred in any way to her singing. But she sat down to the piano and played a duet with Pietro, saying, banteringly, that "if Jack had kept up his violin studies, he could have joined in the music to-night." It was obvious that she did not connect him with the awful thing that had happened to her. Even though she had resolved to put behind her the ambition which had colored her whole life since childhood, it would not have been in human nature to treat him with cordiality if she had suspected him of being the wilful cause of her unhappiness, ever so remotely. So it was in a puzzled frame of mind that he left the house. He would have given a great deal to know what her sentiments toward him really were.

For a week Raymond went through the routine of his existence as an advanced student in the hospital, following up the practical demonstrations there by assiduous reading in his lonely room at night. Books relating to the diseases which came under his observation at the hospital had the first call on his attention, but always he found time to

delve into treatises on various phenomena of the mind about which, although he had learned something, he still felt himself woefully ignorant.

Scientific research was not the only thing that occupied him, however. He never ceased to speculate on what answer he might expect if ever again he put that important question to Adelina which he had already asked her three times. He did not forget her playful promise that if her voice should fail, and there was no one else she liked better, she would "think about it."

Of course, she had spoken only in jest, for she had then no premonition of the unthinkable affliction that had come to her now. But why should not the jest become earnest? There was no one else she cared for. He was sure of that. Well, he would find out from her own lips what his own chances were. He had not seen her for a week—staying away purposely, so that the first sharpness of her distress should have time to wear off. Now he would go—that very afternoon, when he left the hospital. Yes, and, by Jove! on this day Pietro and Luigi would be away, giving lessons, and he would have her to himself.

"I am so glad you came, Jack," Adelina was saying, two minutes after his arrival, as she took

his hat and overcoat. "It is more than a week since you were here."

"No, just a week," he answered, his heart beating a little faster at her indirect confession that she had missed him more than he thought she would.

"It seems longer," she said. "When one is in a strange city, one's old friends become more precious, somehow, and we want to see them as often as we can."

She said this in a low tone, looking through the window at a drift of soft white clouds floating across a patch of sky which could be seen above the houses on the other side of the street—if one were sitting on the sofa, against the wall, near the piano. The sofa was her favorite seat, for this very reason, and she had dropped into it naturally, after making Raymond take the one rocker that the establishment boasted. Now, as she followed the clouds in their slow procession across her bit of sky, she fancied that perhaps, as they were moving from the west, they had been over her garden in Azalia not many hours before. It was not likely that they had been there, but surely there is no harm in a girl indulging her fancy.

As Raymond rocked in his chair, Adelina's clear-cut profile was between him and the window. How often he had seen it thus in the Azalia music-

room. He remembered it particularly on one certain summer afternoon, when she had got up from the piano to speak to the canary on the porch!

Adelina had not brought the bird with her, because she did not know whether she would be able to take care of it in New York, and therefore had left it in the care of Carrie Raymond. But Raymond could imagine it was outside the window in this dingy city street, and that she was just going to chirp to it, as she had been in the habit of doing at home. And now she had spoken as if she would like to be back in Azalia, even though her father was dead, and the old house never could be the same to her again. What of that? John Raymond did not want her to live in her old home, did he?

"Adelina!"

He was out of his chair and leaning over her so suddenly that she looked at him in astonishment. Then, as his words poured forth so fast that they almost tumbled over each other, she knew he was asking her again to do something she had thrice refused him, and somehow, this time, it gave her pain, as well as annoyance.

"Adelina, why not go back to Azalia?" he pleaded. "Why stay here, among strangers, as you have just said."

"Stop, Jack. I said 'in a strange city,' but I am

not among strangers here at home—with Uncle Luigi and Pietro."

Raymond made a gesture of impatience. She went on, quickly:

"Yes, I know what you are thinking—that Signor Golfanti is not my uncle. You have reminded me of that before. But he has been more than an uncle to me while I have lived in New York. He is a father—more of a father than my own ever was. When I spoke of being in a strange city, I was not thinking of him and Pietro."

"Still, you cannot always live like this, working hard for your daily bread. You must marry some time."

"I suppose so—some time," she assented, wearily.

"To me?"

"I don't know."

There was something in her tone that he could not understand. She did not command him to stop, as she had always before when he spoke in this way. She simply seemed not to care. Her manner was that of one who had plucked a dead sea apple and found that everything had turned to ashes, even her capacity for loving.

All this certainly was disheartening to an earnest, lover, and Raymond found himself gradually

ceasing to press his case, while she, following the fleeting clouds across her patch of blue sky, appeared not to know whether he was speaking or not. He made one last appeal.

"Adelina, what do you say? Will you let me take you back to Azalia? Not now, if you are not ready. I will wait as long as you say I must. Two months—six! Only say that some time, sooner or later, you will give me the right I have always hoped would be mine, to stand between you and the world—its hardships, its cruelties, its—disappointments."

The last of the sailing white clouds had vanished behind a dark wall of one of the houses which bounded her bit of sky on one side. There was nothing in the way of her view of limitless space. She gazed into it, but it was only vacancy. She knew that—or thought she knew it. But—was the blue into which she peered actually emptiness? Might there not be something beyond, if only her sight were powerful enough to bring it to her? It was a symbolism of her own present outlook on life. Was her future to be all nothing? Might there not be success—triumph for her, far away in the ether of the unknown? It was hard to believe that she had reached the end of her ambition so soon. She could not believe it. No, the clouds

would disappear, and then, if she fixed her eyes firmly, steadily, confidently, on the clear blue sky, she might come to see at last that it was not all a void, after all. She looked up into John Raymond's face, and as she saw how his lips were quivering with suspense, she whispered:

"Can you be patient with me, Jack?"

He raised his eyes, as if adjuring the gods to witness that he never had shown any lack of that virtue.

"Yes, yes, I know, Jack," she continued, hastily. "You have been more forbearing than I deserve. But—won't you keep on a little longer? I haven't got quite used to it yet—to—to—not to be able to—"

He took her hand, to signify that he knew what was in her thoughts, and that she need not suffer the pain of telling him.

"And so, Jack, I want time to think it all over and make up my mind. You see, I thought until lately that my life would be all so different. Then I don't know whether I love you. I never have known that. But I do know that I don't care for anyone else. I don't believe I ever could."

He had kept her hand, and now, as he pressed it hard, bent lower, as if to kiss her hair.

"No, don't Jack. Don't, please. Not now. I want you to wait."

"For how long?"

She sat in silent thought for more than a minute. Then she answered:

"It is autumn now. Winter will soon be here. I never feel that I know my own mind in winter. The cold seems to get to my heart and brain, so that I have no judgment. Foolish, isn't it? But I can't help it. So let it be in the spring, Jack. Then I will tell you."

"April?"

"Yes."

With that, he went away.

## CHAPTER XXI

"If music be the food of love, play on."

Autumn slowly faded into winter, and winter warmed into spring, with no change in the conduct of the Golfanti household. Adelina's cheerfulness, forced at the beginning, gradually became her normal condition. She had procured a number of piano pupils, with the aid of Luigi and Pietro, and they kept her occupied every week day. Some of them came to her, and others she instructed in their own homes. Thus she became familiar with the highways and byways of the city, and although often she had to go out in inclement weather, it never distressed her. She had once told John Raymond she feared the cold warped her judgment, but physically it had no evil effect on her. She liked her work, and her home life was tranquil, in spite of that fact that Pietro never ceased trying to make love to her.

John Raymond was a frequent visitor, and although Luigi liked the grave, sensible young doctor more and more as he grew to know him better,

Raymond never could break through the wall of jealous reserve Pietro had built up between them. At first, none of them ever referred to Adelina's sorrow, but, as time passed, she talked about it herself, generally with a wondering regret, but with nothing of the fierce grief and antagonism toward the whole world which had possessed her on that night when, with her throat "asleep," she had turned away from the piano in such awful despair. Sometimes she could talk about the loss of her voice almost lightly. She did so one afternoon when she found herself alone with Pietro, and he insisted on playing the tortured lover for the hundredth time.

"I wish you wouldn't be so silly, Pietro," she said, rumpling his black curls playfully with a roll of sheet-music. He swung around to her on the piano-stool.

"Silly!" he echoed, bitterly. "That's what you always tell me."

"It's what you are—a silly boy. But a good one, too."

"Oh, the deuce take my goodness. I am not a boy at all."

"Yes, you are, and you behave like one."

"I don't. I'm a man, and I love you, Adelina."

"Of course you do," she answered, smiling and

threatening him again with the roll of music, "and you are going to keep on loving me—until you meet the *real* girl, and find the *real* love."

"You're the only real girl for me," he insisted, impetuously.

"No, I'm not. You may think so, but I'm older than you—"

"Five weeks."

"And I know better," she continued, disregarding the remark. "I only hope, for both your sakes, that when you do meet the real girl, she will not be a genius."

"Why not?"

"Because, my dear cousin, you have quite enough genius for one family."

"You mean that I ought not to compose music, I suppose?"

"I don't mean anything so ridiculous, Pietro. But you need an anchor, to hold you near the earth long enough to get your dreams down in black and white—in form to show and sell."

"Money is nothing," he snapped.

"It's the world's standard for measuring success," she rejoined.

"The greatest of musicians have died poor."

"Not when they have had the right kind of anchor."

A bright idea struck Pietro at this, and he asked, quickly: "Then, why don't you become my anchor, by marrying me?"

She shook her head at him in smiling reproof, as she replied: "I want to fly myself. It is true my wings are clipped. Perhaps it was Doctor King who clipped them. I don't know. But still I want to fly, and I need a strong anchor to hold *me* down."

There was a knock at the door, and when Adelina opened it, John Raymond walked in. Pietro saw who it was, nodded coldly, and turned to the piano.

"I am glad to see you, Jack," said Adelina with a pleased smile. "Have you just got back from 'Azalia?"

"Yes, I arrived this morning. I had to report at the hospital, but I came here as soon as I could get away." Then, significantly: "This is spring, you know."

She did not shrink at the reminder, but told him she was glad to see him, and asked him many questions about the people in Azalia. Pietro had been improvising on the piano, but now struck into "The Song of a Soul," playing it with the intense feeling he always wove into his favorite composition.

Adelina uttered a cry, as if someone had struck

her. Then she called out to the pianist in piteous tones:

"Pietro, please don't!"

He stopped on the instant, saying, remorsefully: "Oh! Adelina! I didn't mean— I didn't think what I was playing."

"And I didn't think it would hurt me so," she said. "I supposed I'd got over all that long ago."

She turned a smiling face to John Raymond, to prove that the pain had been only temporary, and resumed the conversation which her sudden protest to Pietro had interrupted.

"So Carrie is married," she said, with the lively interest of her sex the world over in the work of Cupid and Hymen. "She has married that Chicago lawyer, and gone to live there, has she? I hope they'll be happy."

"She writes that she is happy—very happy," Raymond answered.

"How is my canary?"

"Capital. He sings louder than ever. So does your Spanish rooster. He's not so musical as the canary, but he makes up for that in energy. Mrs. Ehrhardt says he doesn't get any older in appearance. She is saving him for you. She is convinced you will be back some day."

"My dear old black Spanish!" murmured Adelina. "I should like to see him."

"Caesar! I must go!" ejaculated Pietro, abruptly, from the piano. "I have that pupil in Stuyvesant Square at four o'clock. I'd almost forgotten her."

He made a dive for his hat, which he had thrown upon the piano when he came in, and bolted. It was the happy-go-lucky way in which Pietro often kept his engagements. Composing was of infinitely more interest to him than teaching.

"Poor Pietro! He'll have to hurry if he's going to get there by four," remarked Adelina, looking at the clock. "Teaching is an exacting calling."

"Aren't you tired of it?" asked Raymond.

"Not particularly," she answered, slowly. "It isn't what I had hoped for myself as my life work. But it's music—and there is pleasure in watching the development of technical skill in those who already love it, knowing that they owe it to your instruction."

"But teaching is drudgery, at best, and I want to see you free of it. Adelina, this is spring. You remember what you said to me in the autumn, in

this very room, when I asked you a certain question for the fourth time?"

She had seated herself on the piano-stool, and Raymond, leaning an elbow on the piano, looked down at her eagerly. Seemingly without thinking of what she was doing, she began to play the "Spring Song," so softly that it was easy to talk through the music.

"I remember, Jack," she answered.

"And can you give me your decision?"

She played for some little time, looking at the patch of blue sky toward which her gaze was so often drawn when she was seated at the piano. There were a few clouds, but they were golden-edged, and she would not have had them away if she could.

"What do you want me to say, Jack?" she asked, at last.

"That you will be my wife," he replied, quickly. "That you will give yourself to me, to love, to cherish, to protect, to worship. Can you? Will you?"

His earnestness made his voice hoarse, as he bent over her so closely that his breath rippled the hair clustered loosely over her forehead. She never ceased playing, but her supple fingers were bringing forth the melody without conscious exertion.

"I hardly know what to say, Jack," she said. "A few months ago my reply would have been the same as it always has been. Now, the something I had hoped, that filled my entire being, is gone. The desire is still there, but—without the hope."

"And your answer to me is—"

"If you think it will make you happy—yes."

With the contradictoriness of a lover, now that he knew he had won her, he was not quite satisfied.

"Don't stop playing, Adelina. I can talk better while I hear the music. I have one more question. Do you—love me?"

Her face became very serious, as she answered: "I don't really know. I am not sure that the thought of being your wife gives me happiness. And yet, Jack, the bare idea of any other woman holding that place would madden me. I could not bear it." She played for a few moments without speaking, and then added, coyly: "If that is love, Jack, I love you."

Some lovers would have half smothered her with embraces at this. John Raymond only kissed her hair. He felt himself such a big, coarse creature that it would have been sacrilege to do more. Then he walked to the window and back, while she watched him with a smiling look of proprietor-

ship that he caught as he turned. He would have taken her in his arms then, only that he did not want to stop her playing. He was a lover with unusual self-control.

"Satisfied?" she asked, with a side glance that drew from him a deep sigh of content.

"I can't believe it yet, dear," he answered. "It is all so strange—so unbelievable. To think that, after all these months—years—I have you at last. Why, I—What a beautiful air that is! It seems to express my happiness, somehow. Mendelssohn, isn't it?"

"Yes. One of his 'Songs Without Words.' I think he must have written it for people without voices, so that they could sing it with their fingers."

There was a short silence, save for the bewitching melody that rose and fell under her skilled touch. Then John Raymond asked her, in what he tried to make a steady tone:

"Adelina, suppose your voice were to come back after we are married, do you think you would regret having given yourself to me?"

There was no doubt or hesitation in her reply. She said, quietly:

"When we kneel at the altar, side by side, in that moment I shall put everything else behind me.

If I did not know I could do that, I should never take the marriage vows."

Luigi Golfanti came in, with his customary breeziness, nearly half an hour afterward. Adelina was still playing, while John Raymond, his elbow on the piano, looked into her face with adoration—shadowed at intervals by something that a close observer might have taken for doubt, fear or remorse, or all three.

It was Adelina who went to Luigi, and, with a blush that he thought extremely becoming, told him that John Raymond had asked her to be his wife.

"And you said 'yes,' of course. I knew this was coming soon. I'm glad it come. Now we know what you will do," chuckled Luigi, with his forefinger at the side of his nose.

"And you're not surprised, Uncle?"

"How can I be surprised, when I see him looking at you so many times all winter as if he would eat you up? Pietro, he see it, too."

"Why, Uncle, I didn't know it. Jack, I'm ashamed of you."

"Si, and when he not doing it, you were looking at him," declared Luigi, still chuckling. "You think you surprise me? No. I have eyes in my face." Then, seizing Raymond's hand in a warm

grasp, he said, seriously: "I congratulate you, Signor Doctor. You have steal my little girl, but I am glad of it. You can make her happy, and you will do it."

"I'll try, Signor Golfanti. Heaven helping me, she never shall have cause to regret her promise."

"Si. I know that," said Luigi, adding, as he patted the girl's cheek, "Adelina, Doctor Raymond is good man. You safe with him."

There was a pause, and then Adelina asked, a little anxiously: "Uncle, will you tell Pietro?"

"Si. I tell him. He used to think he in love with you himself. That foolish. He only a boy. His love it is the love of a calf. It is nothing."

But Pietro did not agree with his father, and that night, when John Raymond—who stayed for supper, listening to duets played by Pietro and Adelina afterward—had gone home, and when Pietro was the only one in the Golfanti apartments who had not retired, he went into his studio and brushed angry tears from his cheeks. Even "calf love" is not without its discomfort.

## CHAPTER XXII

"The song that I sing—yea, 'tis no new song;
It is tried—and so it is true."

It was to be a June wedding. John Raymond argued that, as he had waited so long for an answer to his question, it ought to count against the extended period which sometimes intervenes between betrothal and the marriage day. Adelina did not think this invulnerable logic, but she agreed to the proposition. So it came about that, on one bright morning, two months after she had given him her promise, when city workers who lived in the suburbs were bringing their roses to give fragrance and a touch of color to offices in skyscrapers, and to gloomy counting-rooms in dark corners of big stores and warehouses, she came out of her own chamber to the big room where the grand piano stood, to ask her Uncle Luigi how he liked her bridal gown.

"Beautiful! Lovely!" was his quick response. "I always like you in white. You had a white frock on when you sang in the church in Azalia. It suit you. It fresh, sweet, pure. So are you."

"LIKE OLD TIMES, EH?"—*Page 316*

She pinched his cheek as she told him he was a "silly old uncle," and that he would have to get over the habit of flattering her, or Jack would think she had been spoiled. Luigi insisted it was not flattery, but the truth. And anybody looking at the girlish figure in its well-fitting white gown, the pretty, roguish face, and the golden-brown hair, in which nestled two or three white carnations, must have agreed with him. She was an ideal June bride.

Luigi himself was gorgeous in light trousers, white waistcoat, a frock coat which had seen better days, but which, touched up by the skilful fingers of Rubinstein, the tailor, did not show the moth-holes nor the white seams which had been there before its renovation. His tan shoes had been blackened by Tony Balzano, the Italian shoeblack at the corner, and on the coat-lapel was a white carnation, placed there by Adelina. A silk hat, with wide, curly brim, on the piano, would be his crowning glory when ready to depart for the church.

Adelina went back to her room, while Luigi, calling Pietro, who had been putting the final touches to his toilet, slipped off his coat and slid into one of Adelina's check aprons. Then he pointed to the dishpan in which were the soiled

cups and saucers left from breakfast. With a doleful expression on his face which Luigi only laughed at, Pietro helped his father "wash up" the crockery. They couldn't think of allowing Adelina to do it on this occasion, her wedding morn, although she had begged to do so.

"This like old times, eh?" said Luigi.

Mr. Raymond, senior, and Carrie, with her husband, from Chicago, had come to New York to attend the wedding. They would be at the church —a quiet old tree-shaded edifice near Washington Square—and afterward would go West on the train which would bear Adelina and John Raymond away to their future home in Azalia.

Wheels sounded outside and stopped in front of the house, and Luigi shouted, excitedly:

"Here it is! Pietro! Come out! Adelina, you ready? Where my hat?"

He put on the silk hat and began to fumble with his lavender kid gloves, while Pietro called from his room that he would be out directly. Adelina was looking around the room with a sad face. It had been her home for many months, and she could not leave it without a pang. Even though it was here that she had suffered the shock which perhaps would never cease to echo in her heart from time to time, it also was in this home that her

Uncle Luigi had come to be more than a father, while for Pietro she entertained an affection which, if not of the kind he desired, was sincere in its sisterly steadfastness.

"You're sure it *is* the carriage, Uncle?" she asked, as, having drawn about her shoulders the lace shawl she intended to wear to the church, she touched with caressing fingers the fresh pansies in a vase on the table that John Raymond had sent her that morning, and which she meant to take with her on the train.

"Si. Do I not hear the coachman swearing at his horses? Of course it is the carriage, and—"

She put a hand over his mouth and whispered: "Uncle, before we go down stairs, won't you let me tell you that I am sorry to leave you—and Pietro? You believe that, don't you?"

"Si. I know it."

"We have had happy days, Uncle, since I came to be your pupil—very happy."

"Si. Too bad the miserable ones they come, too," he answered, with a lugubrious shake of his head, as his eyes moistened.

"They could not be kept away. They come to everyone, Uncle. I know what you are thinking about. But even those days, in time, will come to

be nothing but a beautiful memory of all your kindness and affection, Uncle, dear."

Tears were in her own eyes, as well as in his, but there was nothing bitter in them. They suggested a gently-chastened soul, rather than sorrow.

"That night, Adelina—you know," said Luigi, as he looked lovingly at her. "I cannot forget. My heart it still feel the anguish."

"Yes," she responded, musingly. "Sometimes, Uncle, I dream that night never was. I seem to see another night, in an immense, brilliantly-lighted theatre, and I am walking on the stage to sing. In the sea of faces before me I see expectation, but always friendly. The audience seems to know and have confidence in me. There is a burst of hand-clapping like the beginning of a great thunder-storm. Oh, it is glorious! I stand for a moment and bow in response to the welcoming applause. Then the orchestra crashes out the opening chords of—What do you think, Uncle?"

"What?" asked Luigi, softly, for the girl, it seemed to him, had become transfigured, and to his poetic southern imagination she was the very incarnation of the art he loved so well—music itself. "What was it?"

"Pietro's 'Song of a Soul.'"

"Ah! You sing that?"

"Yes, and I sing as I never had sung before. There is some new power within me which lends fire to my tones. My voice rises higher and higher. My soul speaks to theirs—the people out front—through the words and melody. I reach the last note, and, as it ends, the audience is on its feet, sending forth roar after roar of applause. I bow, but they will not stop. I run to the wings, and, as they thunder for me to come back, I return, leading by the hand my teacher, Luigi Golfanti."

"Si?"

"There is a hush as they see that I want to speak. Then I tell them, 'It is he who is the master. I am only the pupil.'"

"Ah! That is very good," observed Luigi, after a pause, during which he had regarded with strong admiration her flushed cheeks and kindling eyes. "But, carissima, it is only in dreams that pupils do that for their teachers." He shook his head in whimsical incredulity, and then, coming back to the real present, added: "Remember, Adelina, the carriage is here."

But it was not *the* carriage. A sharp tap at the door, and John Raymond, in the correct attire of a bridegroom, an apologetic smile on his face, came in. His manner was feverish, as it seldom was in this ordinarily well-poised young man.

"Why, Jack! I didn't expect to see you here," cried Adelina. "I got those beautiful pansies, you see. They're lovely."

"I'm glad you like them, dear. I know I am violating all etiquette in seeing you on your wedding day before meeting you in church. But I couldn't help it. The fact is, I did not sleep well last night."

"That not strange," observed Luigi. "I remember, when I get married, I walk the floor all night. I was so nervous—with happiness. That so with you, eh?"

"Yes, but it was more than that. I had a queer presentiment of something evil. I can't explain it, but it was there."

"You study too much, Jack," she said, with tender solicitude. "I hope you won't do it when you—we—get to Azalia."

"I tell you. It is those books you read, about —what you call?—mental phenomena," was Luigi's opinion, expressed with much positiveness. "That one you lend me, he give me the creeps. No wonder you nervous. If I read many books like that, I see ghosts in my bedroom every night. Where is that Pietro? I go and see. He been so long dressing as if *he* going to be married to-day."

Luigi bustled away to the bedroom, and Ade-

lina loved him for his thoughtfulness. She knew he had gone out only to give John Raymond an opportunity to talk to her alone.

"Now, what is it, Jack?" she asked, affectionately, standing directly in front of him. "What is the matter?"

"I don't know, only I had to come and assure myself you were safe, and—and—had not changed your mind."

"About what?"

"About marrying me."

Her merry laugh was heard in the other room, and Luigi remarked to Pietro that he would like to know what the joke was that Doctor Raymond was telling Adelina.

"Don't worry about that, Jack. You can't escape now," was her reply. "In less than half an hour I shall be Mrs. John Raymond, unless something happens."

He drew her to him in a fierce embrace, and his breath on her cheek was so hot that she was frightened. He must be ill.

"What *could* happen?" he whispered. "Can you think of anything that could make you give me up now?"

"Nothing."

She answered promptly, and with her clear

eyes looking into his. He held her close for another instant, and then, as he released her, said, in an altered tone:

"I'm going to the church now, dear. You will be there almost as soon as I, for I hear your carriage driving up to the door."

Luigi came out of the bedroom and ran to the window, pointing excitedly downward, to indicate that the carriage had come.

"Good morning, Doctor Raymond."

It was Pietro, who had followed his father, and who looked very handsome in his new clothes, bought especially for the wedding.

"Good morning, Pietro."

Pietro hesitated, and then impulsively put out his hand, palm upward. Raymond took it at once, with evident pleasure.

"Doctor Raymond," said Pietro, swallowing hard, "we haven't been the best of friends, have we?"

"I have always felt friendly toward you, Pietro."

"I believe that. But I haven't toward you. I've behaved like a cad at times, and I'm sorry—very sorry. It wasn't that I had anything against you as a gentleman, or man. But —well, I guess you know. Will you forgive me?"

The pressure of Raymond's hand was answer enough, and Pietro stalked to the piano and began playing softly, from mere force of habit.

"Adelina, here is something you ought to take with you," said Luigi, taking up from the window-sill the atomizer with which Raymond had sprayed her throat for several days after it was found that Doctor King's operation had resulted so disastrously.

"Do you still use that, Addie?" asked Raymond.

"Not lately. I used to do so, because I thought it made my throat feel easier. But soon I decided that it was not necessary, and I have not tried it for months. I put it out, intending to take it with me, but it seems I overlooked it when I was packing my trunk."

"I'll take care of it," volunteered Raymond, putting the atomizer in his pocket.

"Come on, Pietro," cried Luigi, somewhat testily. "What you sitting there for? We'll be late."

"That's true. We shall all be late. I must go," said Raymond. "My father and Carrie will wonder what has become of me."

He had already reached the door, when a sudden fancy seized Adelina, and she ran to the piano, telling Pietro she was going to try to sing—just

once more before she went away. She never would have him for an accompanist again, perhaps.

Raymond stopped.

"I wouldn't if I were you, Adelina," he said. "It might hurt your throat."

He spoke in the authoritative tone of a doctor, but there was an undercurrent of appeal in it, as well.

"You have not try the voice lately, have you, Adelina?" asked Luigi, casually.

"Not for months. The last time I tried I found it hurt me. I suppose it will now. But—give me the key, Pietro, and I'll try, just for fun."

"There's not much time," said Luigi. "But I suppose we can give you five minutes. Girls always are doing things no one else would think of."

"Addie!" cried Raymond, warningly.

But she did not heed either of them. As Pietro played a chord, she sang the corresponding note, and then, very slowly, ran the octave scale.

"You see," she said, turning to Raymond, "my voice is like a piano with a delayed action. I strike the key, but I must wait for the tone. Now, you'll hear, when I try to connect the tones or sing them quickly. Listen."

She began slowly to run the scale, and then,

without effort, sang it as rapidly as the written music demanded.

A look of surprise and hope came to her face, as she did it again. Luigi, his hands pressed tightly together, leaned forward and made a glad outcry:

"Adelina!"

"Come on, Adelina! Try it again," shouted Pietro, wild with excitement.

Once more she sang the scale, rapidly, clearly and evenly, and then burst into a bravura that she had never attempted in her best days except when assured that she was in perfect voice.

"Brava! Brava! Bravissima!" shrieked Luigi.

"By heaven! You never did it better," cried Pietro, as he ran the scale up and down the piano.

"Uncle! Uncle! I can sing!"

Adelina flung herself hysterically into Luigi's arms.

John Raymond, pale and shaking, leaned his two hands upon the table and stared at her with the awful fixed look of one in a trance.

## CHAPTER XXIII

"I pour my joy forth in a song."

"Adelina!"

It was John Raymond's voice—cold and metallic, as she thought—which recalled her to herself.

"Adelina!"

"Yes, Jack?"

"The carriage is waiting. You will be at the church in time?"

"Yes."

"Very well. I will go there and wait for you."

"I'll soon be there. But—Jack, dear—isn't it glorious?"

She was by his side as he was about to open the door, looking into his face for sympathy in her great joy.

"You mean—"

"My voice coming back. Oh, I must sing Pietro's 'Song of a Soul' before I go. I won't be long. You won't mind waiting for just a few minutes, will you? Tell Carrie. Oh, no one knows what it

means to me. Play, Pietro! Play! I must sing, or go mad!"

"Adelina!"

This time there was stern resolve in John Raymond's tones, and she stopped as abruptly as if he had taken her by the wrist and held her.

"Yes, Jack!"

"It isn't too late," he said, forcing himself to speak steadily, although his agitation could not be kept out of his tones altogether. "Now that you can sing perhaps you are sorry you promised me—But I will release you, if—if—you desire it."

"Jack?"

"Think, Addie! Think!" and his words sounded like a groan.

She put one hand over her eyes, holding out the other gropingly.

"Don't let me think, Jack. Take me."

He caught the wandering hand and whispered, rapidly, in tones that were not like his own: "If you knew I had caused the loss of your voice, would you come with me, then?"

She pulled her hand away and standing off at a little distance, looked at him with wide-open eyes, as if an unbelievable revelation had come to her.

"I don't understand it," she said, separating

each word and syllable, and speaking very slowly. "You couldn't do such an awful, cruel thing."

"I did do it. I am a doctor, and I did it. Now, will you give yourself to me in that church?"

She hesitated for an instant. Then, flinging up her head, as if she had cast from her an unworthy doubt she answered, in clear, ringing tones:

"Yes, I will, for I don't believe it."

"It is the truth," he persisted. "It was I who caused you to lose your voice for so long. I and no one else."

"If it is the truth, how did you do it?" broke in Luigi, who, having heard enough of the half-whispered conversation to awaken his suspicions, now found them confirmed by Raymond's last loudly-uttered assertion. "Tell us. We want to know. We *must* know."

"I'll tell you, Addie," said Raymond, addressing himself to her, and not to Luigi. "Doctor King told me you would not sing well until the vocal cord stretched by him had in the course of time worked into unison with the others. I did not tell you this. I led you to believe that the success or failure of the operation would show at the first trial of the voice."

She nodded, and he continued: "When you

tried to sing, I secretly suggested to you that you must fail."

"You mean telepathically?"

"Yes. That night you were so nervous as to be a good subject for mental suggestion. I made that suggestion as strong as I could. When you tried to sing you were filled with the dread of breaking down. Your voice did not respond immediately. That gave you a shock that shattered your nerves still more, and the suggestion of failure did the rest. Now you know why you could not sing that night."

Luigi and Pietro had been listening as he made this confession, and if Pietro had not been quick in catching his father's arm, the old Italian would have had John Raymond by the throat.

Adelina, looking sternly at him, did not move.

"Why did you do this, Jack?" she asked, at last.

"I saw your voice stealing you away from me —dragging you toward a life that could mean only your destruction in this world and the next, and I determined to save you," he replied, doggedly.

"To save me? From what?"

"From the stage. From a life so unwholesome that less than ten women in every hundred pass through it unsoiled."

"My mother was one of the ten—or she would have been if your estimate were correct. Don't you think I could be, also?"

"Forgive me, Addie. I should not have said that. I have no right to say positively what the stage is or is not. I speak only by common report."

"In Azalia," she suggested, bitterly. "It is Azalia's opinion you share."

"As I have always lived in Azalia except during the past few months, yes," he admitted, adding desperately, his face drawn with agony: "I love you, Adelina. Don't you see that I would believe anything which would warrant me in trying to keep you?"

"Even to inflicting such torture on me as you did that night, when you told and acted a falsehood."

"I love you, Addie."

She went on, unheeding him: "And you would have married me with this lie in your heart."

"I love you."

"You would have tricked me into marrying you."

"Listen, Adelina," and there was a world of tenderness and appeal in his tones now. "Once, when you were a little girl, you ran a splinter into

your hand. I wanted to take it out, but you were afraid when you saw my penknife."

She sat down by the table, her face hidden by her hands, and wept softly.

"I knew that the splinter must not stay there," he continued, "so I took you and held you by force while I cut it out. You screamed with the pain as I did it, but afterward you were glad."

She did not look up when he had finished speaking. He stepped over to her and whispered:

"Is this the end?"

Without replying, she got up and went to the piano, beckoning to Pietro, who took his seat on the stool and looked up at her questioningly.

She resolutely brushed the tears from her face and pointed to the music of "The Song of a Soul," which was open before him.

"Will you sing it, Adelina?" asked Pietro.

She nodded. He played the prelude.

"Adelina!" cried Raymond. "Won't you speak to me?"

An impatient sweep of her hand was all she vouchsafed to him. Then she began to sing with a fervor that told how she rejoiced in the possession of the voice she believed she had lost forever.

John Raymond stood by the table, looking at her. Luigi—whose anger at him had evaporated

as suddenly as it arose—was by the side of the young doctor.

Adelina finished the song, and Pietro played it over again, softly and lingeringly, as if loath to let it go. Luigi went to her and whispered something in her ear. She shook her head. He persisted. Once more she made a negative sign, but a gentle expression had dispelled the frown with which she had driven away the tears as she arose from the table to go to the piano.

"What do you want me to do, Uncle?" she asked, at last.

A knowing smile lighted up honest Luigi's face. He answered, quietly, but loudly enough for Raymond to hear:

"You love him, Adelina. It is in your voice. Only through love could you have sung as you did just now. I have been a singer and I know. You love him, I tell you, and you will forgive him." Then, as he looked into her face, he added, confidently: "You *have* forgiven him."

She did not shake her head now.

"Signor Doctor Raymond, come here," cried Luigi, in mock-stern accents. "Adelina want you. Pietro, come with me to the studio."

Father and son went out, leaving them together.

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